

We are concerned about discrimination based on colour of skin. How come we are not concerned about discrimination based on the shape of skin?

Comment made at a women in office conference

# Calvinist Contact

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## Committee will have three reports

### Bert Witvoet

GRAND RAPIDS, Michigan — The Committee Regarding Headship in the Bible appointed by the 1982 Synod of the Christian Reformed Church is coming out with three reports, according to information given at a conference on Women and Church Office held on November 18 and 19.

Rev. Len VanderZee told the audience of some 200 people that there was going to be a majority report and two minority reports. The majority report is going to recommend that the office of deacon be open to women, and that women be used as pastoral associates who will not take part in consistory meetings. Four of the seven committee members are the authors of this report.

Two members are saying in their report that all the church offices should be open to women, and one member will recommend that none of the offices be open to women.

Rev. VanderZee told the conference that he had received this information from a member of the Committee Regarding Headship.

The Chairman of this Committee, John A. De Kruyter of Chicago, Ill., did not want to confirm this information when contacted by *Calvinist Contact*. He indicated that "they were at the end of the way." He did acknowledge that there were a number of reports, but said that the contents of these reports could not be revealed at this time.

When the reports are finalized, he said, they will be given to the Stated Clerk, Leonard Hofman, for inclusion in the Agenda of 1984 Synod.

Reports for the Synod have to be in by February 15 if they are going to be

presented to Synod.

Last year the Headship Committee was expected to come out with a report before February 15, but did not. The delay at that time was attributed to sickness of a member and some difficulties the Committee experienced in coming to a clear understanding of the issue of headship and its concurrent question of women in office.

Some representatives at the Conference on Women and Church Office were encouraged by the fact that 6 of the 7 Headship Committee members would be in favour of at least women deacons. Others were hardly enthusiastic. One elderly woman was heard to say, "Big deal. I guess I won't live to see the day that all offices will be open to women."



Women on the cutting edge, yet relaxed

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — "Partners in the Gospel" was the theme of the Conference on Women in Church Office held on November 18, 19 at Calvin College. Pictured is the panel that spoke on the experiences of women in church councils and Calvin Seminary. From l. to r. Beverley Meyer, Adjunct Elder, Hope CRC, Oak Forest, Illinois; Judy Plekker, Associate Deacon, Calvin CRC, Grand Rapids, Mich.; Jane VanderHaagen, Deacon, River Terrace CRC, East Lansing, Mich.; Leanne Van Dyk, Student, Calvin Theological Seminary.

(For a report on this conference, see p. 10).

## Construction union squeezed

### Paul De Groot

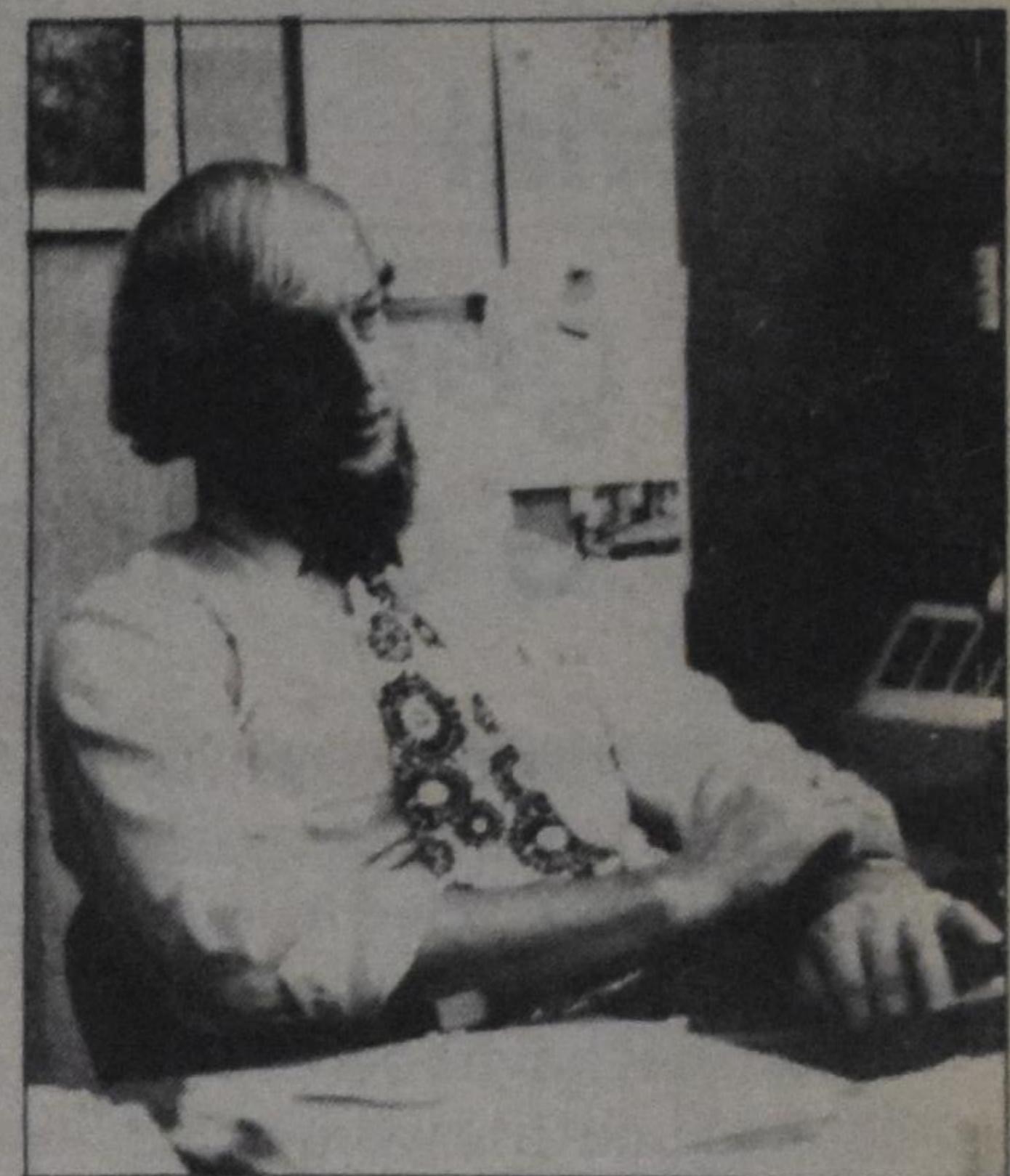
EDMONTON, Alta. — Alberta's construction labour scene could be thrown into chaos by a bill which permits companies to set up non-union subsidiaries, unions in the province say.

Bill 110, introduced by Alberta labour minister Les Young Nov. 18, requires a secret vote of employees in a non-union subsidiary to determine whether they wish to join a union. In the past, they would have been automatically included in a union if a union could prove to the Labour Relations board that the employees of the subsidiary were for all practical purposes working for the same company as the company with whom the union had a contract.

Although employees of the subsidiary companies will theoretically have the right to vote to join unions, it is unlikely they will do so, said Dave Werlin, president of the Alberta Foundation of Labour, which has threatened an all-out lobby against the legislation.

Construction companies "will put those workers in a position where they will be told 'if you vote union, we will close this company down,'"

Some union firms may close down, in favour of their non-union subsidiaries,



Co Vanderlaan  
said Co Vanderlaan of the Christian Labour Association.

"The contractor will say 'I've got no work for this company, and I do with that (non-union) one.' So the employees will report to work, often in the same office, but with lower wages and benefits and no union."

The main impact of the legislation would be a sharp drop in construction wage rates, said Vanderlaan. Union wages range up to a \$24 an hour, but some non-union companies are offering as low as \$9 an hour to journeymen carpenters.

Large construction companies say they are unable to compete with smaller non-union firms in the province because of the differences in wages. Some large companies have already set up such subsidiaries, paying substantially lower wages, to take advantage of the pending legislation.

Vanderlaan predicts that wage rates could fall even lower than \$9 an hour in some trades, because union rates have acted to keep wages higher. When the large construction companies start competing with the small ones at lower rates, the small companies might be forced to go even lower.

Although construction unions can be blamed for excessive demands, and failing to concede enough to companies during the current recession, the legislation is still bad, Vanderlaan said.

"If this is approved it will be a free for all."

Sam Lee, vice-president of the Alberta Building Trades Council, said no new jobs would be created by the legislation. He predicted that some small companies will be driven into bankruptcy by the competition from large companies.

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## Editorial

### The genesis of a new sense of urgency

I attended the Women in Office Conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan, a few weeks ago. I did not quite know what to expect. Was I going to be subjected to loud revolutionary ideas we associate with women's liberation movements?

Now that I have been, I can say 'no' to that. I came away feeling different about the women in office question too. Before I was sympathetic; now I feel a sense of urgency.

What impressed me throughout the conference was the mature, sensitive, spiritual leadership various women brought to the conference. I remember thinking that this is a kind of leadership too often absent from ecclesiastical gatherings.

Granted, not all women are as well spoken and poised as some of these women were. But the specifically female contribution will, I suspect, be fairly widespread and similar.

There was an emotional depth in the discussions I wished we would see more of at council meetings. If it is true that women tend to think with their hearts, is it also true that men tend to feel with their minds? If such generalizations can be made, they point to a complimentary arrangement.

Surely, the Lord gives gifts to all believers, male and female. Seeing these gifts being used by women in a fuller way than I am accustomed to made me think that there is some urgency to the question of women in office.

#### How long may we drag our feet?

But there was another catalyst.

I reflected on the fact that time and again synodical committees consisting of some of the best minds we have in the church have found that there are no biblical grounds to exclude women from office. It appears that the Headship Committee which hopes to report to next year's synod will be no exception.

Dr. Louis Vos, one of the panelists at the Conference, referred to Galileo's theory of a helio-centric world. His theory used to be considered a theological statement. It no longer is. Vos suggests that the question of women in office will go the same way.

If it is true that the issue is not so much theological as it is sociological, may we continue to drag our feet?

I think of Seminary student Leanne VanDyk, who undergoes the pressures of feeling called by the Lord to enter the ministry of the Word and not yet being able to find a place in the Christian Reformed Church to exercise that calling..

I think of the facile statement made at the conference by former stated clerk Rev. William Brink that it makes very little difference whether a person is ordained, instituted or appointed, and the passionate response of Rev. Marchiene Rienstra (no longer Christian Reformed for obvious reasons): "Rev. Brink, it means that women cannot preach the Word of God and cannot offer the bread and wine to people in the name of the Lord."

These things injected me with a sense of urgency, even though I believe that changes will come that women will some day enter all the offices of the Christian Reformed Church.

The question we must face is, how will that change come about?

#### The politics of change

Human freedom is never an absolute thing, the freedom of women being no exception. Nothing that has to do with human functional matters is ever absolute. Only God and his laws are. We have learned this from our anti-revolutionary forebears.

The apostle Paul too recognized that freedom was not an absolute principle. He sent the slave Onesimus back to his master Philemon. But he tells Philemon to accept Onesimus not as his slave but as his brother — his equal.

The directive for change is there, even though the submission to the order of things is there too. Paul was no revolutionary agent.

For us this means, I think, that we act responsibly within the historical context of the church and society for necessary change. A concern for where the church is and where society is must be as important as it was in the days of Paul.

We have to weigh pastoral concern for those who want change against pastoral concern for those who don't want change. We have to balance concern for unity of the church with concern for relevance to society. We may not absolutize change anymore than we may absolutize status quo.

I think what this all builds up to is that patience is permitted as long as there is movement to bring about necessary change. Or to put it in a different way, changes are allowed if there is concern for those who need more time.

My new sense of urgency came at a time when my sympathy had made me dormant. As a result of this meeting I attended my personal mix of patience and urgency has taken on more equal proportions.

## Letters

### Grenadian and Afghans know

I would like to comment on brother Tuy's remarks about the American invasion of Grenada. I grant him that one is hard put to find any basis in international law for this military intervention of the U.S. and six Caribbean states.

But his comment that "... the difference between this invasion and the Russian invasion of Afghanistan must yet become visible," seems rather odd.

Certainly, the jubilant Grenadians in the streets and the grim-faced Afghans in their mountains will have no trouble discerning the difference.

Ed Vanderkloet,  
Rexdale, Ont.

### Does not like the trend

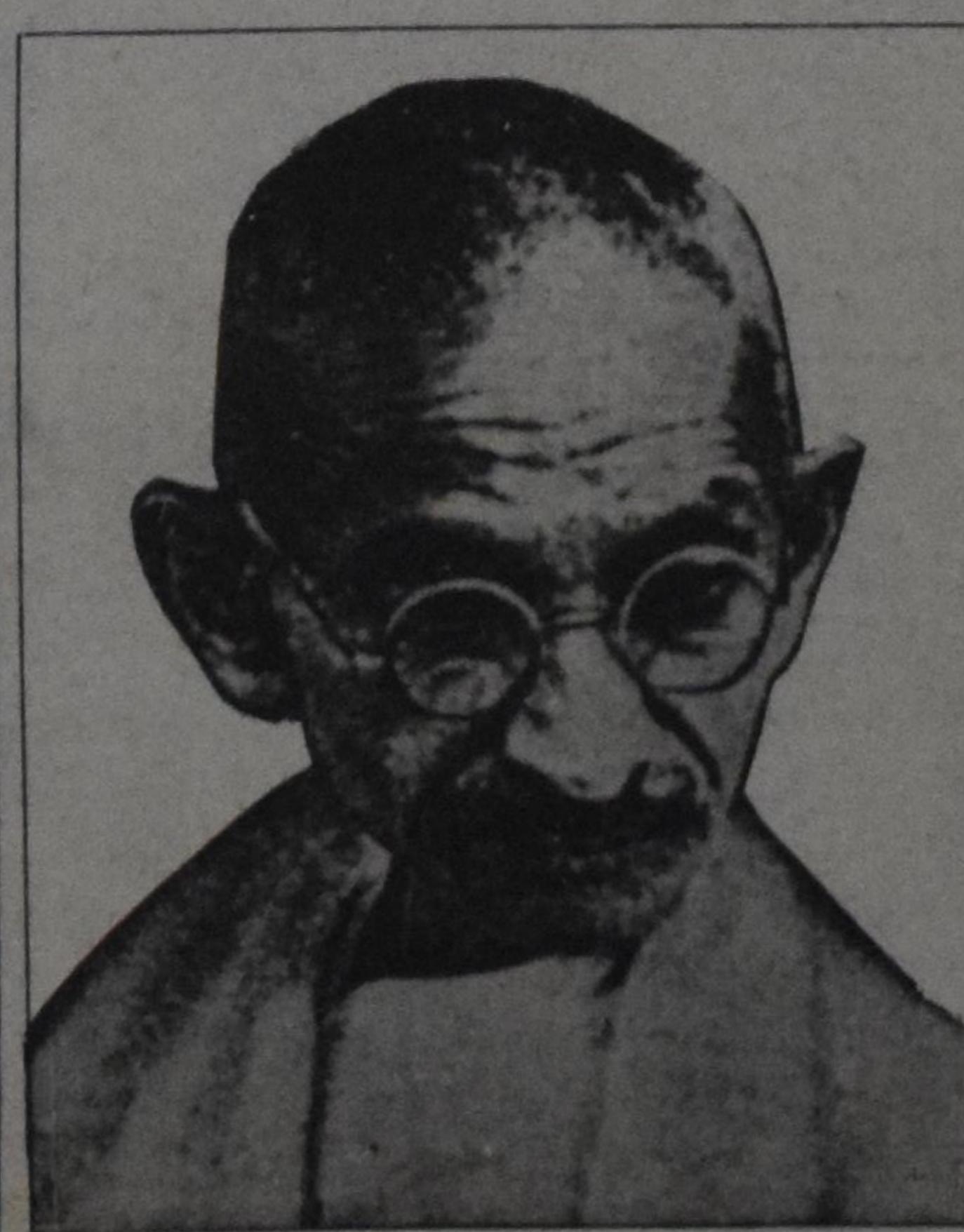
This is to let you know that we decided not to renew our subscription for C.C.

The reason is that in general this magazine has gone backward in content and quality in the last few years, especially when the new editor took charge of C.C.

Some examples:

1. Pontius Puddle — I call it "Spotted," does not belong in a Christian weekly.
2. Rev. Praamsma's articles — lack of quality and not very educational.
3. Rev. Tuy — Alcohol advertising is very likely not allowed in C.C. and rightly so. But Rev. Tuy can do it. He says: "Het bier is weer best," etc. Could breweries wish to have any better advertizer?

Also his walk on the "naked" beach. You think that this belongs in C.C.?



Ghandi

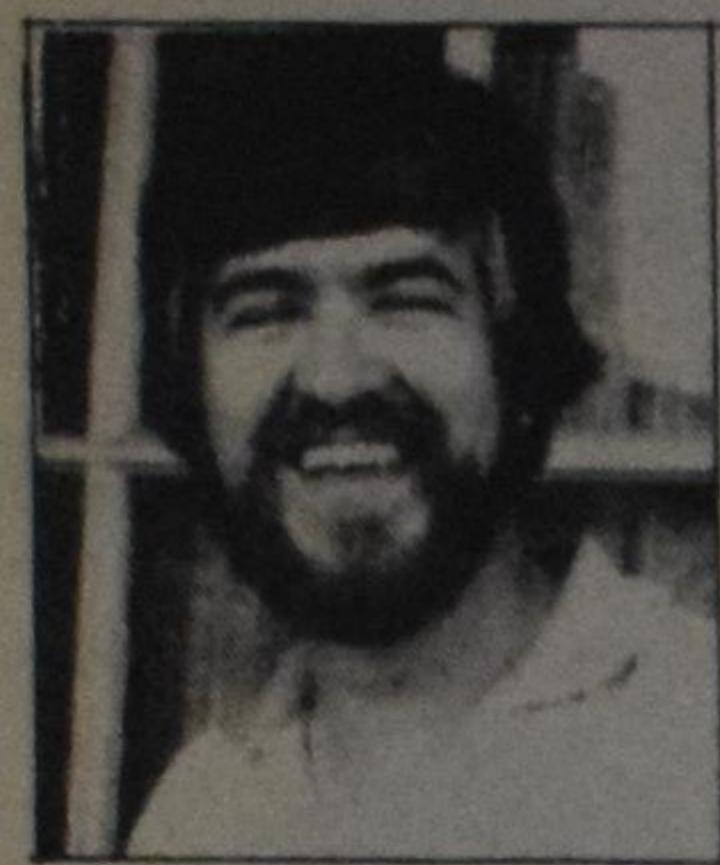
Mr. Witvoet gives us a review of a film he saw in the show, "Ghandi," even comparing Ghandi with our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Very poor comparison. If Ghandi tells you more than the Gospel of Jesus Christ, you should start reading your Bible again. An editor of a Christian magazine should not go to the show much less give a detailed report!

Hopefully, the board of C.C. will take necessary steps to correct these problems, and we will enjoy a better Christ-centred weekly again.

J. Kruisselbrink,  
Fergus, Ont.

When I compared Ghandi to Jesus Christ, I concluded that Ghandi was no Saviour. An important point, don't you think?  
Editor

## JUST A MOMENT/HERMAN PRAAMSMA



*In arguing too, the parson own'd his skill,  
For e'en though vanquished, he could  
argue still;  
While words of learned length and  
thundering sound  
Amaz'd the gazing rustics rang'd around.  
And still they gaz'd, and still the  
wonder grew,  
That one small head could carry  
all he knew.*  
(Oliver Goldsmith, 1728-1774, from  
**The Deserted Village**)

If there is a professional illness that the clergy suffer under, it must be the talking sickness. I almost said that right. I should have said: if there is an illness their audience suffers under.

I know what I'm talking about, just try and stop me.

It is rich experience that moves my pen, and undeniable examples that spring to mind as readily as a wolf jumps a wounded caribou.

I have never yet attended a Classis meeting where an Elder did not say, usually with a patient smile normally reserved for three year olds: "If only you ministers would not speak so much and so often, we would have been out of here already."

I have seldom attended a social gathering where, no matter what the topic was — politics, religion, psychology, it doesn't matter — all heads did not turn automatically to a serious faced figure of authority upon the immortal words: "And, what does the minister think of that?" Unfortunately, the reply is invariably much longer than the question.

I haven't mentioned consistory meetings for obvious reasons. If there ever was a more ready made forum to bring out the verbal best in men of the cloth, I don't know what it would be.

I suppose there must be many pastors' wives out there who have said to their alleged better half at one time or another: "Look, honey, just because you're a minister doesn't mean you have to have an opinion on everything," or words to that effect.

How often doesn't it happen that a reverend person stands up and begins with one of the following variations:

Well, I guess I should say just a few words ...

I've been asked to say something tonight ...

Although I don't really know too much about finances, still I must say ...

There is a compulsion at work here that knows little if any bounds.

What is the reason for all this, you think?

I have a theory (but then I better have one, eh?): people live up to expectations placed on them by their surroundings. Maybe, just maybe, if we stopped expecting ministers to have 'a word' on everything, perhaps we could slow them down. Just a little, maybe.

And perhaps we would find talent in other, unsuspected places.

Herman Praamsma is pastor of the Fellowship Christian Reformed Church in Rexdale, Ont.

**EDITORIAL POLICY:** We encourage our readers to write brief responses to material published in our paper. Please specify the issue and article you are commenting on.

Letters may be abbreviated or only excerpts may be published to meet editorial requirements. Unsigned letters will not be published but names may be withheld upon request.

A long letter, 500 to 750 words, may be published in the upper right hand corner of this page, provided it meets editorial standards.

### Keep good work up and prices down

Just like to tell you I look forward to C.C. each week with all the variety in it. And I still enjoy the Dutch sections, even though I was just 13 years old when we left Holland in 1951.

It amazes me to no end how people find articles to write or criticize about. But I suppose that's what makes the world go around or might we say spin?

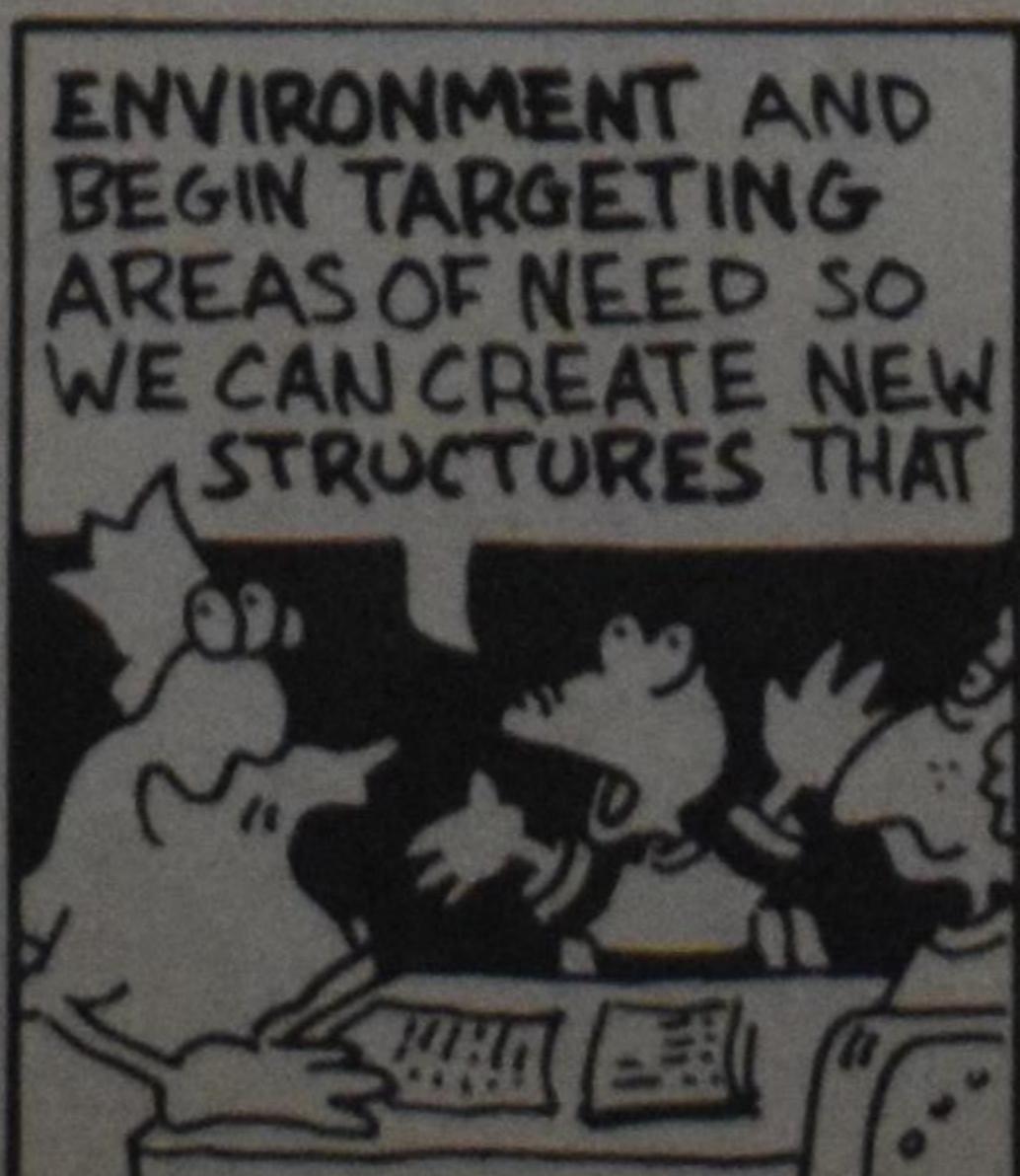
For instance, Syrt Wolter's article in this week's C.C. (Nov. 18) criticized several hymns. Yes, if we really think about what we sing, maybe there won't be much singing done. But I would hope that when we as Christians, which means followers of Christ, sing "O Master let me walk with Thee" we would know what Master we sing about. Right?

And I think Pontius Puddle is kind of stupid; excuse my expression, maybe I should say silly?

All in all, keep up the good work, but



### Pontius' Puddle



don't keep increasing your classified rates. I noticed an increase of 40% in some since 6 months ago. That is steep isn't it?

Thanks for listening.

Audrey Neerhof,  
Chatsworth, Ont.

### Quite right, wot?

Jack van Arragon was quite right in whatever it was he said.

Jim van Oosterom,  
St. Catharines, Ont.

## Society

### A proposal to consider

#### Ben Vandezande

I would like to make a proposal in order to deal with what I see as a double-barrelled problem in the Christian community. The two problems as I see them are: 1) a lack of family time due to the large

Instead we would stay home as families and spend some refreshing time touching with each other. Marriages would have time to share instead of "hit and run." Children would have time to do things with their parents instead of going to one

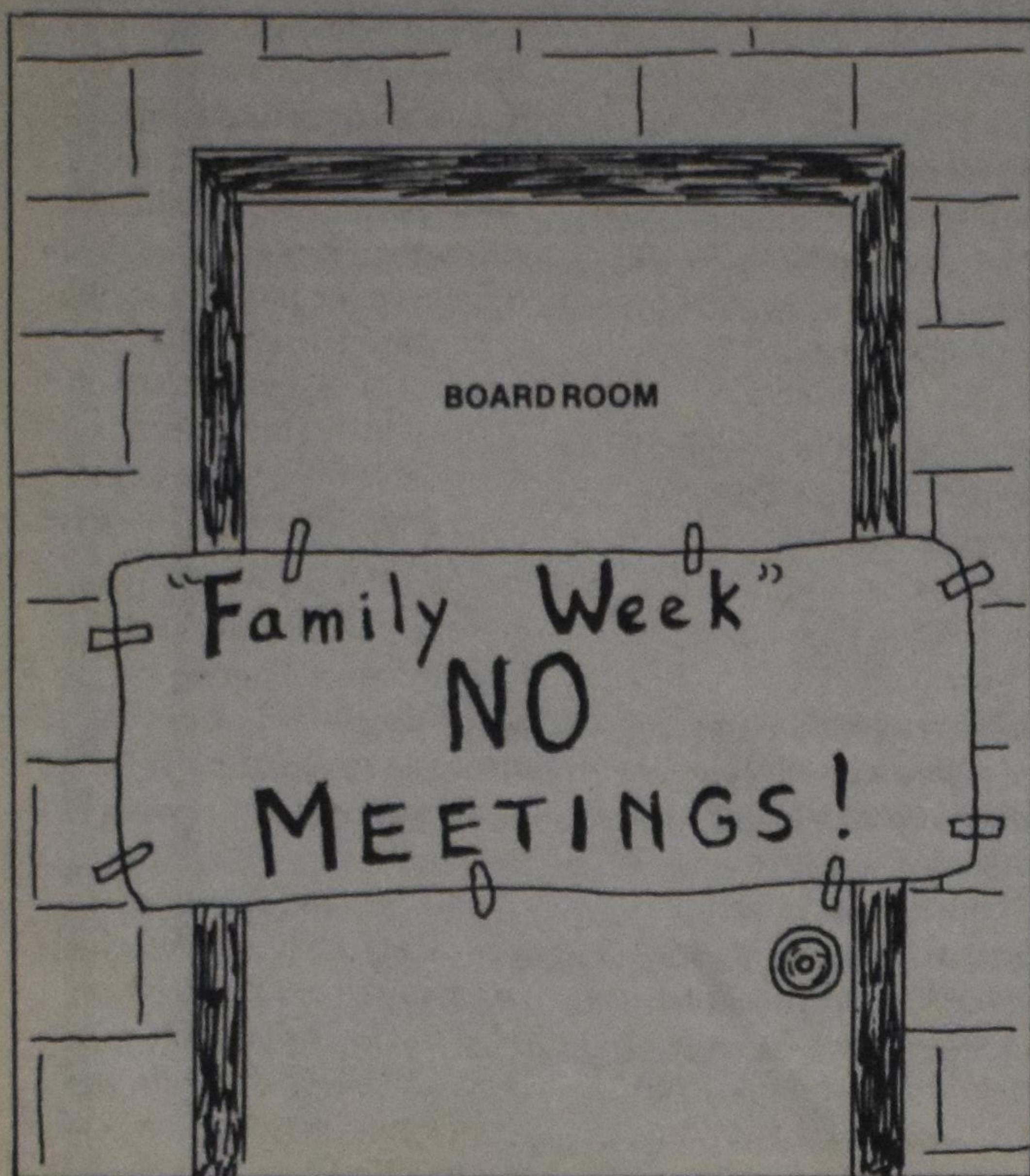
But there is a second part to it. We could use the time to build up another area; i.e.) our awareness of and involvement in our community. We could start right in our neighbourhood (see my article "Right on your own block.") As families, we could begin to minister to people we normally don't have time for. Perhaps we could share some gospel in an evangelistic way ... that's so easily put off too. "But, But, But!"

I can hear some of you protesting already. Such an idea is artificial — we should build it into our regular lives. You're right, but the fact is we don't. And since we are such responsible meeting-attenders maybe this is one way to start.

Some of you may protest because it would take the continuity out of catechism and various groups. I doubt that — but if it's a problem, why not have catechism at home that week?

Others may wonder whether the other 3 weeks of the month are going to be so full of meetings that we'll need a week just to recover! You may be right. But meetings ... it is the topic for another article.

My point is that we must pay careful attention to family life and community life. To do that we need time — quality time. Maybe one week a month to focus on these areas is a useful tool towards that end.



number of functions and meetings; and 2) a lack of awareness of and involvement in our local community and neighbourhood.

The proposal is that one week of every month be designated "Family week." During that week no school, church or Christian organization meetings will be held. There will be no catechism, youth groups, or adult discussion groups. There will be no meetings!

more club or society that will train them, and parents will have some time to train themselves by reading ...

For some, this may prove to be a scary thing. What would we do every night?! Maybe after the first week we'll be hungering for our meetings again! Maybe we'll uncover some problems we have buried because we didn't have the time or want to deal with them. This would give us a chance to.

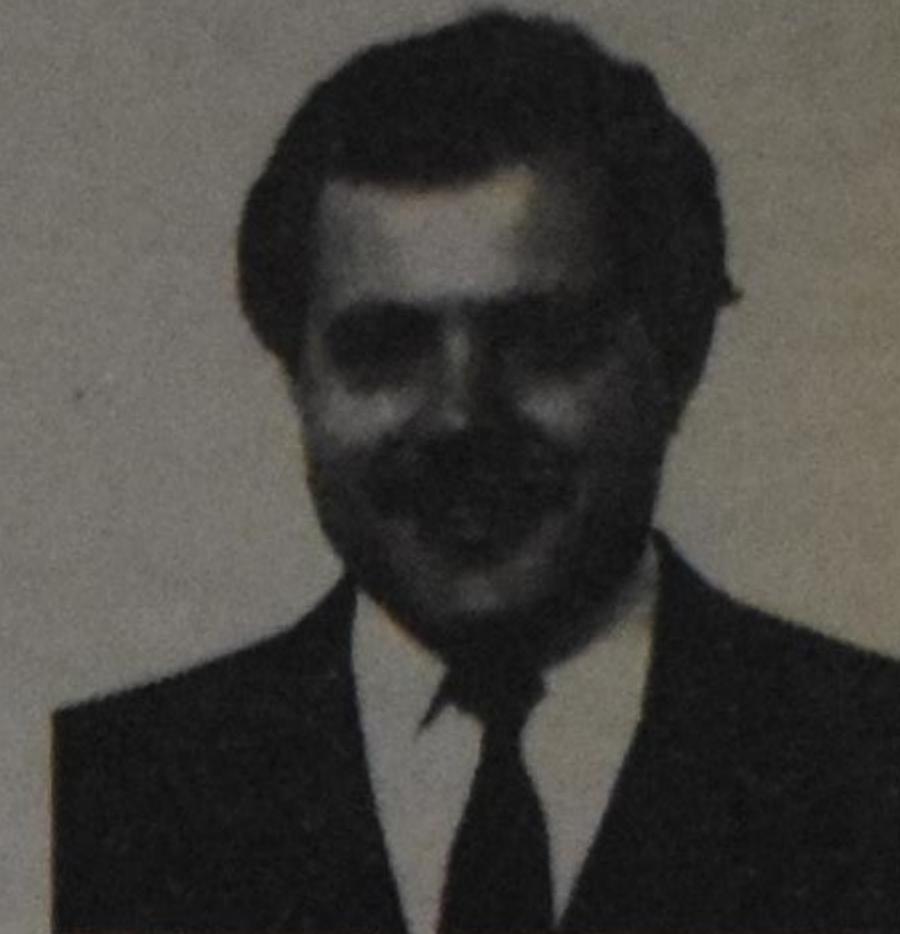
### The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada speaks out on abortion

The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada affirmed a "Charter on Human Life" at its annual meeting held a few weeks ago. The Charter speaks boldly yet compassionately about the need to bring "grace, justice, love and reconciliation" to this issue.

Brian Stiller, EFC's new executive director believes that this statement is important partly because it's not just aimed at Christians. "We have never taken care to break through to the public mind and get our way into the secular press," Stiller said. This statement is one attempt to do that. And press from across the country have shown interest.

Stiller welcomes the recent decision of the Christian Reformed Churches to join EFC. Much of the statement is a reflection of the Reformed approach according to Stiller.

The Charter affirms the need for a positive education



Brian Stiller

program on sexuality starting in the home. Stiller's point is potent here; "In today's society where sex is so freely discussed, one in ten teenagers still gets pregnant. Free information has not been the answer because it has been information given but not understanding caught. Therefore the need for education which includes "positive and wholesome values."

B.V.

### Evangelical fellowship of Canada charter on human life

The membership of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada remains clear and united in their declaration of the sanctity and dignity of human life, according to the gospel of Jesus Christ. The ongoing national debate on the issue of abortion has resulted in widely polarized opinions, but often without consideration of those pressed with making personal decisions about abortions, and largely insensitive to people who suffer from guilt or who are in need of guidance or material assistance. We wish to express to Canadians the grace, justice, love and reconciliation offered by Jesus Christ, King of life and the universe. Thus:

We affirm the unique and high value of all human life; we recognize the fetus as human life from the time of conception; and we acknowledge the special relationship of all humans to God as His image-bearers.

We assert that it is the responsibility of all parents — and all members of society ultimately — to instill in their children an education of positive and wholesome values and, as one result, thereby preclude unwanted pregnancies among unmarried girls and women.

We condemn the wanton or arbitrary destruction of any human being, from the time of conception onward throughout life. We agree, however, that induced abortions be allowed only when clearly and ultimately a choice must be made to save one of two lives — the mother or the unborn child.

We therefore encourage Christians to testify against the evil of unnecessary abortion, and to promote sexually responsible and chaste living.

We call Christians and church leaders, as brothers and sisters in the Lord, to teach by example those who suffer from guilt the forgiveness and love of Jesus Christ and reconciliation within the body of Christ; to offer compassion, counsel, and support to unwed pregnant women and others involved in their lives, and to assist the pregnant woman to carry the child to birth.

We urge the Government as administrator of public justice: to protect human life at all stages of development;

to ensure that the law and its support systems are adequate to uphold all human life;

to restrict unnecessary abortions;

to promote alternatives to abortion;

to call Canadians to recognize their responsibilities in sexual relations; and

to promote marriage and the family as God-given, life creating and life supporting institutions.

We pledge to: foster a public atmosphere which promotes life in the fulness of the resurrected Christ; speak out on the dignity of human life and proclaim in word and by example the reality of Jesus Christ and His church and the healing, freedom, joy and love He brings to people everywhere.

#### "Ad Wijdeven Oogsten op Vreemde Velden"

Over het leven en werken van emigranten in Canada. Emigranten in elke provincie komen voor het voetlicht en hun leven beschreven. Geïllustreerd, gebonden, 20" cm x 28 cm.

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# Fortress America — Mother Russia

## Jim Van Oosterom

The previous article dealt with the tendency in American foreign policy to react, with force of arms, to any communist threat, especially in the western hemisphere. Since 1945 or thereabouts, official US foreign policy has been called "containment," the quarantining of Soviet communism around the world. This policy reflected a profound fear of Russia which, with the advent of thermonuclear weapons, escalated greatly.

## A new US foreign policy?

Especially since Vietnam, however, the gloomy feeling has grown that America's conventional military might is limited. As well, the rapid development of both tactical and strategic nuclear weapons dramatically reduces the need for a US conventional military presence around the globe. The feasibility of a limited nuclear war has been admitted publicly.

There is still a deep concern for Western Europe, but there too the emphasis has shifted dangerously from reliance on NATO's conventional forces to the nuclear deterrent.

Middle East problems continue to fester, threatening far-flung if not global war. Yet positive US policy, through a Big Power conference, does not exist. Southeast Asia policy, after Vietnam, has been in disarray. The China policy, initiated by Nixon and Kissinger to outflank Vietnam and further confront the Soviet Union, remains stillborn. There has even been talk of abandoning the Pacific rim to the care of the Japanese who, much to Washington's chagrin, have shown little interest in becoming a US proxy in the Far East.

Thus in some areas the "arms on" policies of yesteryear have been reversed. Vietnam, it was decided after decades of acrimonious debate and the loss of numerous lives, was really not in the interest of the much ballyhooed national security after all. Certain outposts were not defensible and with the growth of the nuclear factor, not really crucial anymore.

There is also the economic side: Americans are currently providing most, if not all, the defense needs of nations such as Japan, Korea, Taiwan and the Philippines whose economic policies, ironically, threaten America's own economic structure. Certainly the incongruity of this is not lost on foreign policy planners.

But nations of the western

hemisphere are another matter. The US has always perceived them to be essential to American security. Thus the "arms on" policy is now resurgent in Latin American countries. They are considered manageable from both economic and military points of view. Anti-communist action there will continue in any way, shape or form.

We hear much talk about "political solutions," but what exactly does that mean? As we saw last week, in the absence of genuinely Christian foreign policy, subversion and military action will be the primary means

The concept of Mother Russia has always been defensive. Russian psychology has always been defensive, in part because of its historic backwardness, in part because it has no natural barriers to discourage invaders and, finally, because of the enormous economic and logistical problems involved in fighting wars of aggression. Have you had a critical look at a map of the Soviet Union lately? As we all know, defense mechanisms always trigger aggressive behaviour.

## East and West before 1945



Churchill, Truman and Stalin at Potsdam, July 1945

for defending Fortress America. For, as the famous nineteenth century German military analyst Karl von Clausewitz put it: "War is merely the continuation of politics by other means." In other words, war is a political solution, a shibboleth in which the military is well versed. But hardly Christian!

Thus the Fortress America foreign policy is a sharply modified version of the old policy: the emphasis has been shifted from containment of communism around the globe to containment of Cuba, Russia's client state.

## Mother Russia

What about Russian foreign policy? Despite the mindless atrocities and savage inhumanity of the Soviet regime, especially under Lenin and Stalin, we must find out what Russia's basic needs are. For in its needs we find the rationale for its foreign policy.

humanitarian attempt — ignored by Russian textbooks — to provide much needed food to the Russian people during the famine years of the early Twenties. But gradually mutual fear and loathing grew into a deadly fatalism that came to permeate foreign policy thinking in both Russia and the US.

The Second World War did little to improve relations. Incomprehensible to the West, Stalin signed a non-aggression pact with Hitler. Upon Hitler's invasion of Poland, Stalin moved his troops into Poland to share the spoils. The West was outraged by this treachery and was unmoved by arguments that Russia was in no position to fight Hitler.

The fact that the Russian people, classified with Jews as *Untermenschen* by Nazi doctrine, suffered incredibly from Hitler's unspeakable savagery, was often met with indifferent shrugs in the West. That Russians bore the brunt of the war embittered Stalin to no end. He began to suspect that his demands for a second front to take the pressure off the Russian people were being deliberately stonewalled.

Stalin's attitude was not surprising, since vice-president Harry Truman in 1942 recommended to the US Senate to alternate aid to Russia and Germany in the hope that Russia would be exhausted at war's end.

Then, too, Stalin suspected, not without reason, that some Allies would welcome a separate peace, if not with Hitler, certainly with Germany. Ominous indeed!

## The Cold War to Kennedy

Relations were fouled still further at the Potsdam Conference which saw strong and concerted attempts by the British and Americans to quarantine Russia, despite the appeals of men like US secretary of commerce Henry Wallace, who declared that "We should be prepared to judge Russia's requirements against the background of what we ourselves and the British have insisted upon as essential to our respective security. We should be prepared, even at the expense of risking epithets of appeasement, to agree to reasonable Russian guarantees of security." But with Roosevelt dead and Churchill now put to pasture and, in Stalin's view, making warmongering speeches, the arguably forthright mood of the Teheran and Yalta Conferences was scuttled.

After the war, Russia's overriding concern was to keep Germany weak. But Western refusal to force Germany to pay Russia 10 billion dollars in war reparations, convinced Russia that the West was determined to re-arm Germany.

Equally damaging was the development of the atom bomb. In 1946 the United Nations appointed an Atomic Energy Commission. That same year the Americans presented the Baruch plan to the UN, which proposed setting up an atomic authority with control over production of the bomb. If all states renounced the bomb, read the plan, the US would stop making it and dispose of its existing stock. At this time, Russia did not have the bomb. The Soviet counterproposal agreed to UN inspection but demanded immediate destruction of exist-

Continued on page 6...

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# Church

## Pastoral Pondering

### Calvin endorses Antioch practice III

#### Jack Vos

Reformed churches have much respect for John Calvin. His teachings bring people back to the Word of God. When Calvin says something, it deserves to be listened to. Well, Calvin has said some things about fasting. Has that been listened to?

#### What are you saying, John?

In book IV of his *Institutes* Calvin writes about prayer and fasting. His view is that, in spite of ignorance and superstition, fasting has always had a useful place in the life of God's people. What good is it? It's a help for three important parts of the Christian life. It's a help to weaken and subdue our sinful desires. It's a help to better prepare us for prayer and meditation. And it's useful to humble ourselves before God when confessing our guilt.

Why is it a help? Here are Calvin's own words:

Surely we experience this: with a full stomach our mind is not so lifted up to God that it can be drawn to prayer with a serious and ardent affection and persevere in it.

He calls fasting "an excellent aid for believers today".

Calvin points to a few solid examples from the New Testament. There is Anna (Luke 2:37). This woman, in worshipping God with fasting, "trained herself to sustained prayer." Then there's the fasting in that pioneering church of Antioch (Acts 13:1-3). The members of that church fasted "to render themselves more eager and unencumbered for prayer."

#### Feeling strongly about it

Should Christians then really engage in fasting? Of course, says Calvin. It was useful for God's Old Testament people. He asks, "What reason is there why we should not

do the same?" He adds that, if anyone says that the testimony of the Old Testament is inappropriate for the Christian church, "the fact remains that the apostles also followed the same practice." He even says that there are situations in which fasting is "a holy ordinance and salutary for all ages."

When, then, should people fast? There are no hard and fast rules especially for one's personal life. But Calvin does suggest that it should be engaged in when a church has to choose a minister, or a big issue has to be settled by a church body, or there appear judgments of the Lord's anger (pestilence, war, famine). In such situations Calvin feels that it's the pastor's duty to call people to prayer and fasting.

#### Can't hear you, John!

Today Reformed churches ignore this teaching of John Calvin. When I think about that, I have to ask why? You and I readily admit that there are many public events that drive us to prayer. There are an abundance of personal needs as well, not the least being the stubborn presence of sin in our life. What is the quality of our prayers? Is there room for improvement? Aren't some helps in order? Like fasting? Or do we have something that works better than fasting? I don't.

Something keeps us from following the example of that successful church in Antioch. It is the same thing that keeps us from hearing what John Calvin said.

What do you think it is?

*Jack Vos is pastor of Covenant Chr. Ref. Church in St. Catharines, Ont.*

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Klaas Sis

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Continued from page 5.

ing US arsenals. The US refused.

What ended all discussion between East and West was Poland, recognized by Roosevelt as "a source of trouble (for Russia) for over five hundred years." Explains a British historian: "Throughout history Poland had been a corridor through which Russia's enemies had advanced to attack her; Germany had used this corridor twice in the last thirty years." Understandably, Stalin wanted a powerful but friendly Poland to act as a buffer. To him, that meant a communist puppet state.

#### Attitudes harden

In 1953, enter John Foster Dulles whose resolve to liberate countries under Soviet domination by massive retaliation sounded like near-declarations of war to Moscow. To encircle the Soviets and,

since 1949, the Sino-Soviets, there came US outposts: Iran (1945), NATO (1949), SEATO (1954), the Baghdad Pact (1955). In 1957 many of these were equipped with IRBM's. In 1955 the Soviets countered with the Warsaw Pact and their own IRBM deployment.

By now too much water had passed under the bridge to allow for reasonable discussion. Stalin had alarmed the West with his practical annexation of Eastern European countries. This matter had been discussed, but not resolved, at Yalta, beyond Churchill and Roosevelt's agreement to help ensure "reasonable Russian guarantees of security."

#### Two defensive blocs

The US had oceans and polar caps to guard the Fortress. Geographically, Russia had no barriers. Thus over the centuries it has been overrun by Mongols, Swedes, the French and the

Germans. It has done battle with the Austrians and the Japanese. It has been menaced by the Turks.

Little of this may speak to people who have always lived in a fortress. Only recently, since the looming of the prospect of ICBM saturation strikes, have we begun to feel our own nakedness.

#### Can understanding remove paranoia?

I do not mean a sympathetic understanding of communism. I mean a knowledgeable understanding of Soviet behaviour based on historical fact and a clear, dispassionate assessment of Russian self-interest. Unless we gain such an understanding, both nuclear psychosis and war hysteria on both sides will mushroom beyond measure.

*Jim Van Oosterom is an historian and freelance writer living in St. Catharines, Ont.*

# Prayer — wellspring of biblical spirituality

**George Vandervelde**

In a previous article (Nov. 18) I talked about the erosion of biblical spirituality in the Reformed community. I linked this erosion to the banning of God in society, to doctrinalism in the church and activism in leadership. In this article I want to see how we can recover spirituality.

It's one thing to point to erosion, quite another to reverse it. If that's true in agriculture, how much more in the area of spirituality.

We wish for magic formulas and foolproof techniques for recovering biblical spirituality. Alongside instant coffee, instant spirituality would be handy. Unfortunately, spirituality does not come in a "just-add-water-and-stir" package. It is subject to development and distortion, maturation and manipulation, erosion and cultivation. The key to biblical spirituality seems as unhelpful as it is obvious. It's like saying to someone with severe marriage problems, "Just pray." We're inclined to respond, "That's obvious. But what can we do to save the marriage?" With respect to spirituality we are apt to reply, "Prayer? Yes... and then what?"

This impatient search beyond prayer for more practical suggestions cannot but miss the mark. We have described spirituality as a lively sense of God's presence. Prayer, therefore, cannot be regarded simply as a means to an end, a request looking for an answer. With regard to spirituality, prayer is itself an essential part of the answer. After all, to pray is first and foremost to place oneself consciously and deliberately in the presence of God.

We tend to trivialize prayer. We present our petitions and thanks as if it's the most ordinary thing in the world. And in a way it is. We were created to walk and talk with our Creator. Prayer is a focussed and concentrated "talk" with God.

Nevertheless, the act of prayer is doubly extraordinary.

It is extraordinary that we, mere creatures, are able to converse with the Creator of heaven and earth. In prayer we have an "audience" with the King of Kings. It is doubly extraordinary because of our situation. Given the reality of sin, one would expect prayer to consist of groveling and cowering before a holy and just God, begging him for mercy and favours. Instead the Bible announces the good news that we have free access, an open highway to God. Exposed as sinners, we may nevertheless enter boldly into his presence.

Not surprisingly the Bible presents this open and free interchange as one of the prime fruits of the work of Christ (Romans 5)

## Prayerful silence

Ironically, to recover biblical spirituality, we may have to **stop** praying for a while — "praying" in the sense as our talking to God. To pray rightly, we may have to stop talking to God long enough to become aware of what we are doing. We must learn to be silent before God.

We need to take time in our prayer simply to be in the presence of God, aware of his majesty, his holiness, his love, his justice. We cannot rightly express ourselves before God unless we are properly impressed by his august yet intimate presence. As creatures and adopted children it is fitting that before we clamour for the Creator's attention, we learn to be attentive to Him. If we fail to be attentive to Him in prayer, how can we be attentive to Him in the hustle and bustle of daily life?

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for attentiveness to God does not mean that every prayer needs to contain a period of silence. That too would stifle prayer. There are many kinds of prayer. Prayers are as many-hued as the variety of daily life and of personalities. Yet all of our prayers are enriched if part of our prayer life is marked by attentive silence. Even a hasty chat with God comes fully into its own when it is coloured by the wonder of chatting with God.

Silence can be uncomfortable. A twenty second pause in conversation can be awkward. However, when two people can be silent together for some time and be entirely comfortable, you can be sure that those two are good friends. As we become more deeply aware of who God is and who He is willing to be for us, we will learn that it is good simply to be in his presence, to approach Him for the moment with silent adoration, unspoken joy, or even inexpressible sorrow.

## God as answered prayer

Long before our time, saints realized that prayer — even "answered prayer" — means nothing if we were merely to receive the things requested. Augustine prayed: "Grant me yourself, because without you my desire would not be stilled — even if I received everything you have made." Similarly, Thomas à Kempis said, "All that you give, Lord, amounts to nothing if what you give isn't you yourself."



George Vandervelde

In Christ God has given Himself wholly. Through the Spirit of Christ we are filled with the *fullness of God* (Eph. 3:14-19). Mindboggling! God doesn't merely allow us to come before his throne; He makes our hearts His throne, our lives His home.

That the Creator of heaven and earth and the resurrected Redeemer is willing to set up house in and among us cannot but affect the way in which we approach Him in prayer. Before we put our tongue in gear for prayer, it may have to be thrown into neutral for the moment by the sheer wonder of this: the fulness of God — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — in us!

## "Inner Closet" and "Theatre of God's Glory"

We have pointed to prayer, not only as the primary step towards, but as itself the wellspring of biblical spirituality. Moreover, within prayer we have singled out silence as an essential element. The danger now looms large that spirituality will be equated with what is sometimes called "devotional life." Furthermore, to emphasize silence seems to place a premium on quietude and passivity. That would be highly misleading. To restrict spirituality to special "acts of worship" and to equate silence with passivity is to cap the wellspring of biblical spirituality.

Since biblical spirituality is a response to the presence of God, it can be neither constrictive nor inactive. Solomon realized that not even the heaven of heavens — leave alone the temple he had built — can contain God (1 Kings 8:27). How ludicrous then is any attempt to contain God and our response to him in the "inner closet." Transformed, renewed lives are the fitting bodily worship of the Creator who is busy redeeming His world.

Any spirituality that does not course through the veins of our body as we stand in the kitchen or in front of the classroom, as we sit behind the wheel of a tractor or in front of a computer key board is not worth its biblical salt. Because it finds its rest in the Redeemer, biblical spirituality does not rest until the entire creation is lit up and transformed by His presence.

George Vandervelde is part-time pastor of the Christian Reformed Church of Willowdale, Ont., and part-time instructor of theology at the Institute for Christian Studies, Toronto, Ont.

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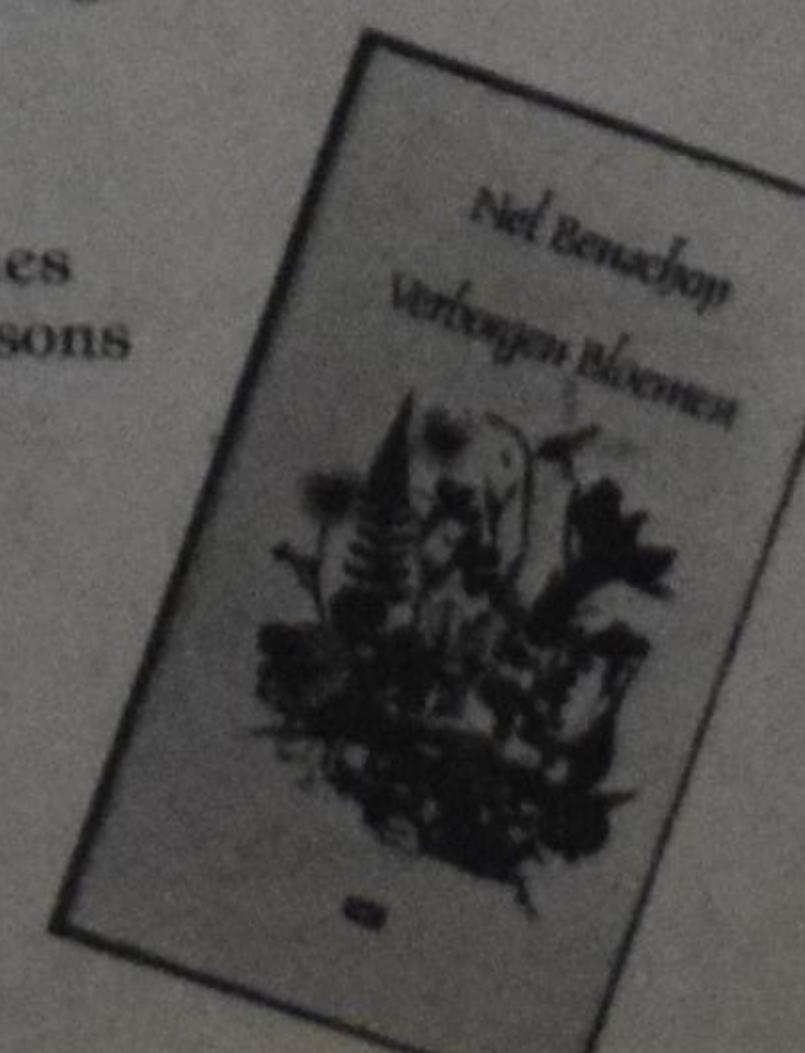
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- 2) Sailboat Christians — always go with the wind.
- 3) Steamboat Christians — make up their minds where they ought to go and go there regardless of wind and weather.

We would like to add to the list a type of Christian who does not respond to the call to service: Dry-dock Christians — they prefer to watch others make mistakes.



### Building on the charter

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By granting us a charter, and allowing us to confer the

degree of "Master of Philosophical Foundations", the Ontario government has recognized our right to exist as a Christian graduate school in Canada. It has also given us the responsibility and the tools to reach an even greater number of Christians who can benefit from our research and insights.

We believe that God has opened doors for us through the charter. We want to build on the past in His strength. We want to change the sprinkling into an outpouring and continue to grow as the salt of the earth. But not without **your support**. We need your help in meeting the challenge to witness to God's will in our society.



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## Logos schools defeated by Calgary public board

### Jeff Adams

CALGARY, Alta. — Parents of children attending four special Christian and Jewish schools within the mainstream system are scrambling to save the institutions now that the Calgary Public Board of Education has voted to have them abolished. Court action to overturn the board's decision is under consideration. Parents and other supporters are also pondering an appeal to the Catholic board to see if the special schools can be accommodated within that system.

The schools, two Jewish and two established by the Christian Logos Society, are not private institutions.

Although biblically based, they operate within the Calgary public system and receive full financial support from local taxpayers and the Alberta government in the same way other public schools do.

The fact they receive this general funding and yet provide special teaching not available in

other public schools became a major issue during the campaign preceding Calgary's October 17 municipal election.

Betty Walpot, a member of the Emmanuel CRC, was a public board of education candidate who campaigned in favour of the special "alternative" schools including one tailored to Canadian Indians.

Eight of 25 other candidates adopted a similar position. Mrs. Walpot told voters they had a democratic right to have their children educated in a religious context. She said the schools, by preserving a diversity of religious and ethnic backgrounds within the Calgary public system, were enriching society.

But Mrs. Walpot lost, as did every other first-time candidate who favoured retention and/or expansion of the alternative schools.

The only candidates favouring religion in the classroom who succeeded were incumbents Sandra Anderson and Ann Tingle. All seven other members of the newly-elected board were part of a slate of candidates which opposed alternative schools.

The fact they held a clear majority when the polls closed made the outcome of the board's Nov. 8 meeting inevitable: it voted 7-2 not to renew the Christian and Jewish



Betty Walpot

schools' operating contracts when they expire next June.

The Indian school gained a reprieve but trustee Ann Blough said it will probably also have to go if the board is to be fair to all minority groups.

If they lose the current battle for their survival, Jewish and Christian parents of children attending the alternative schools, are faced with two options.

They can choose public secular schools or opt out for more expensive private institutions like the Calgary Christian school. Fortunately, the Alberta government forwards 75 per cent of its per-student grants to private schools like Calgary Christian. Most provinces do not.

### School supporters past and present urged to pay up

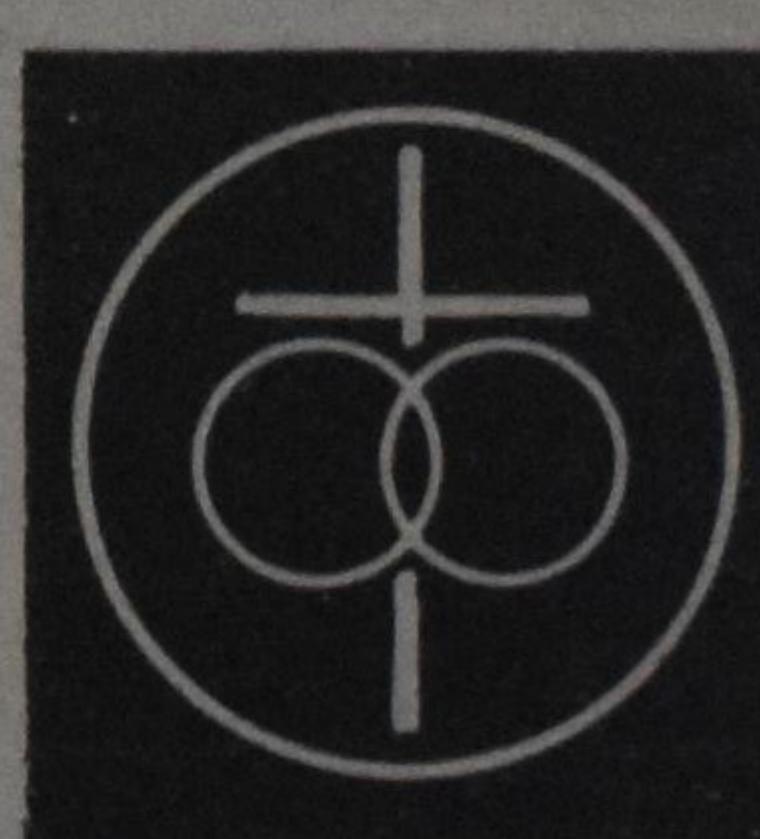
In every one of our school societies there are doubtlessly parents who were unable to pay the tuition of their children during the past school year. They had paid in the past, but now, with no income, paying "school money" is simply impossible.

That's all very well. We are interested in seeing all of our children receive a Christian education and we believe in helping carry one another's burdens. However, we are on the up-grade, so we're told. Undoubtedly some of our fathers have jobs this fall who were unemployed last September. We hope there are many such. If that is the case, there is now again an income

where before there was none. There are, of course, numerous places where this new income can be spent. Bills have accumulated, debts have been incurred; these must be paid.

Under such circumstances there may be a tendency to slight that payment of tuition, particularly if none has been paid for some time. However, such an attitude is hardly fair. When family income again grows, parents should lay aside a portion of it for the school. Bills to the school should be regarded as an obligation as well as other bills.

From the "Christian Home and School," September, 1933.

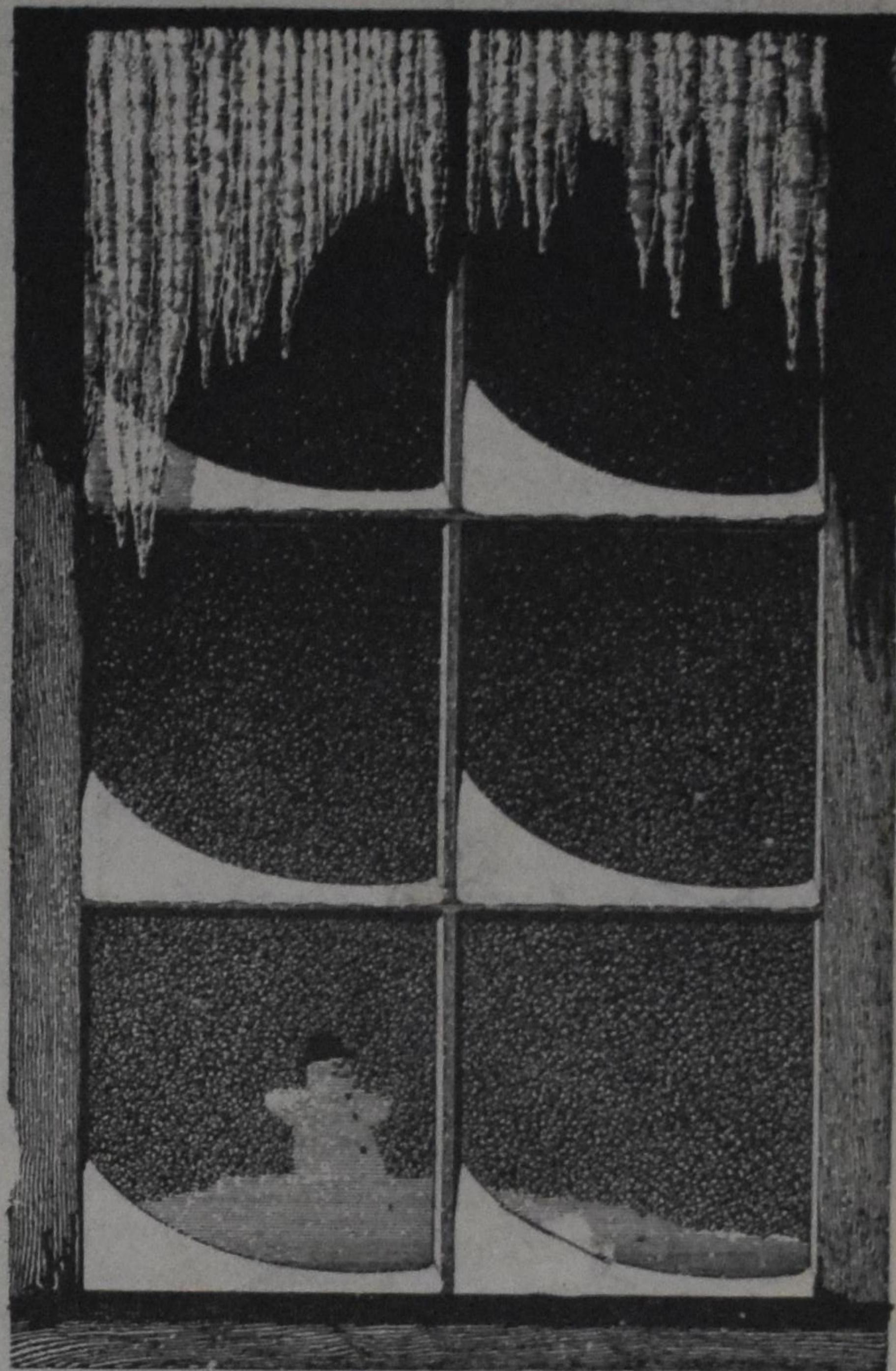


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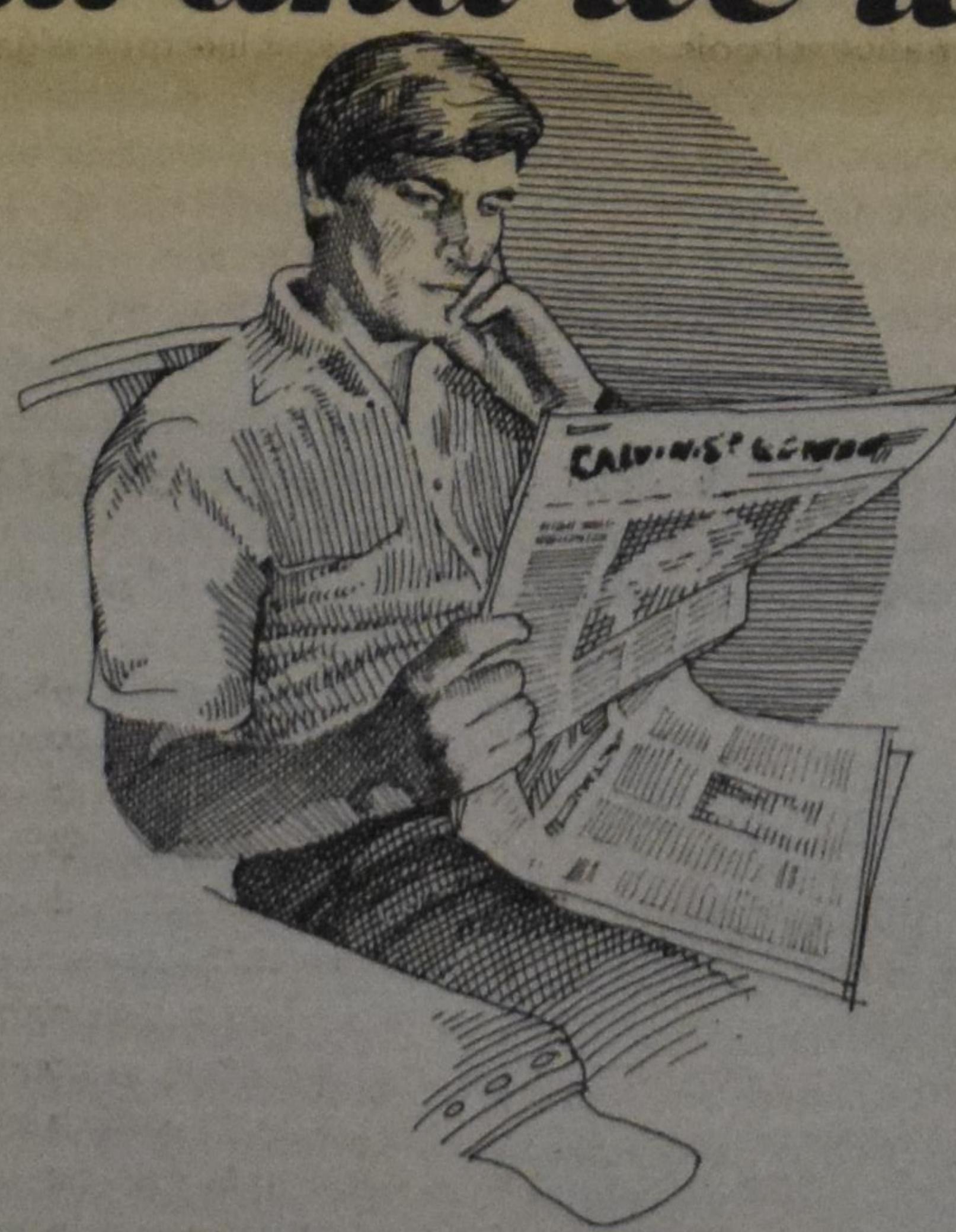
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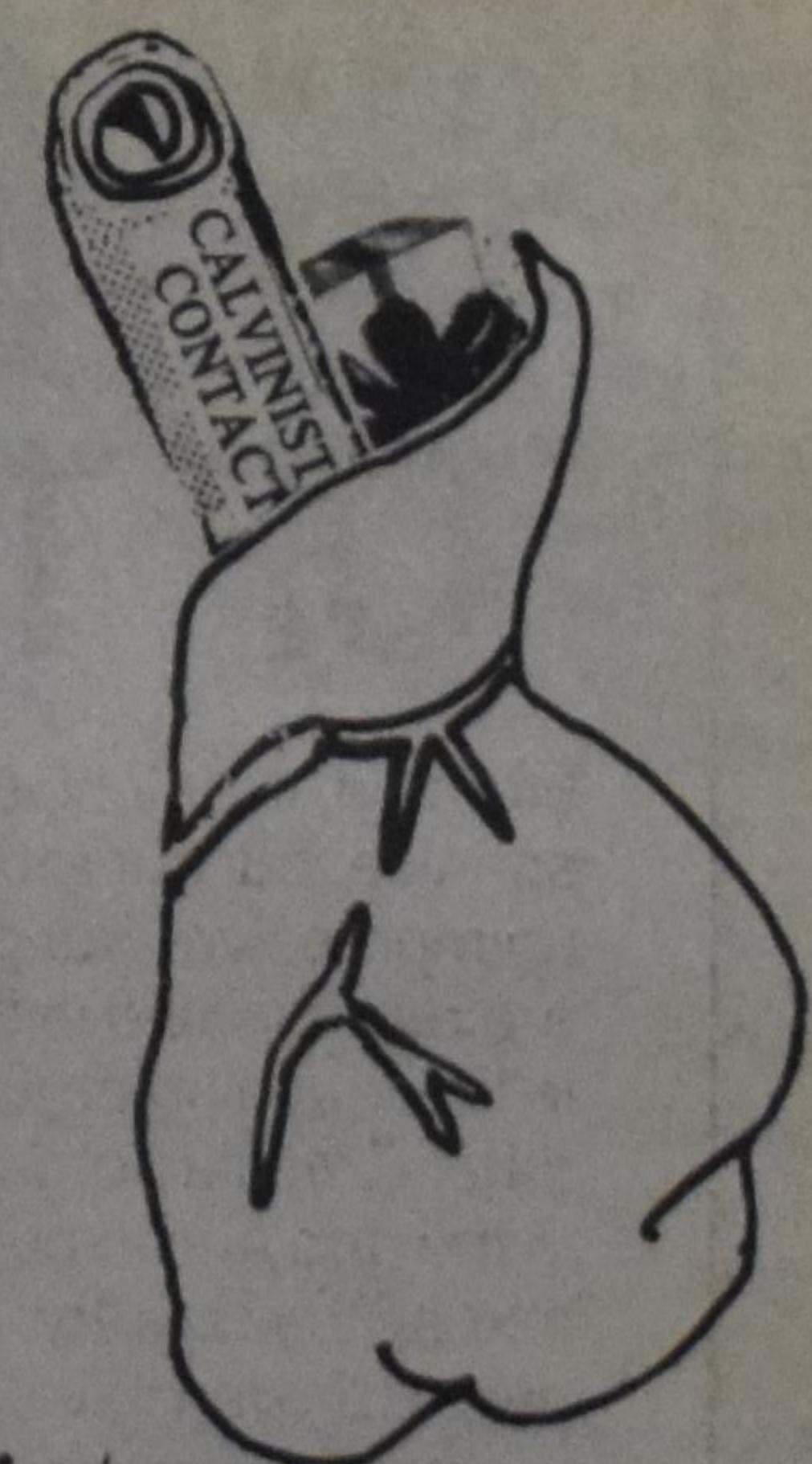
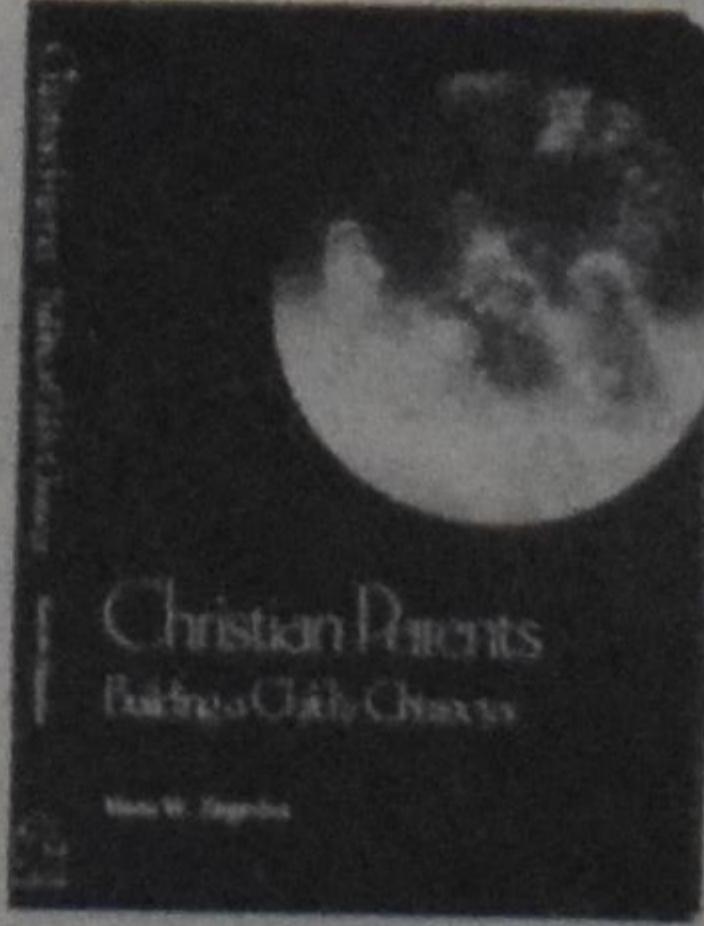


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# Feature

## Churches and women on the cutting edge

### Bert Witvoet

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — More than 200 women and men attended the Conference on Women in Church Office held on November 18, 19 at Calvin College. The theme of the conference was "Partners in the Gospel."

Sponsored by six Christian Reformed Churches who have or have had women in office and the Committee for Women in the Christian Reformed Church, the convention according to a brochure, was intended to "develop a sense of unity among local churches and church members committed to the full use of women's gifts."

The program which started Friday evening at 5:30 included speakers, panels and a worship service.

### A crime not to grow

Friday evening keynote speaker Rev. Cleo Ludwick, RCA Chaplain at Pine Rest Christian Hospital, reflected on the difficulties she and her husband experienced when they faced changes in their relationship because of her desire to grow as a person.

But the result was greater appreciation for each other. "It is the Christ in him that sees the Christ in me," said Rev. Ludwick.

She went on to stress the importance of personal and relational growth. "After five and a half years in the ministry I have grown more than in the 51 years that went before.

"To be in healthy, meaningful partnership in the gospel requires that all persons involved must be growing — women and men," she continued. "Not moving, not growing leaves us dissatisfied, bitter and angry.

"The greatest crime against women is not lack of status, lack of opportunity in education, physical rape or violence, although all are evil; the greatest crime has been not to change, not to grow — to remain little girls."

She concluded by saying that "our purpose is bigger than me and you and our children and grandchildren. It is God's redeeming plan for this world, and so may it be."

### Panel discusses church and change

The panel discussion that followed and that was entitled "The Church and the Process of Change" was started off by Dr. Louis Vos, Professor of Religion at Calvin College. He focussed on theology and change.

### Theology

Vos referred to Galileo's theory that the sun, not the earth, was the centre of our solar system. "In his days that was a theological question," said Vos. "We say it isn't."

Vos predicted that the same will be true of the question of

women in office. "It will remain a theological issue as long as the church thinks it is a theological issue. The time will come when the Church says, 'That is not the essence of the gospel'."

### Ethics

Dr. Richard Mouw, Professor of Philosophy and Ethics at Calvin College, spoke on the ethics of change. He mentioned a statement by Abraham Kuijper "only in churches that take their place in Calvinism do we find that spiritual independence which enables us to oppose even the most powerful officer in the church."

Mouw went on to say that he was an advocate of change. But he added the following qualifications: 1) when we disobey synodical rules it must be based on a higher authority, 2) we must not promote a schismatic, separatist spirit, 3) we should follow orderly procedures as long as they bring about necessary change.

### History

Former President of Calvin Seminary and historian Dr. John Kromminga spoke on history and change. He pointed

The pastoral approach has to take place on three levels, Rienstra said. "The emotional, the attitudinal and the scriptural. People's emotions must be respected and accepted." According to Rienstra church leaders have not dealt with the question of women in office at the emotional level.

One must also deal with people's attitudes and thoughts, see how the society has molded them.

Finally, there is a way of listening together to scripture rather than battle each other with proof texts, she said. This must be done in a spirit of prayer and love.

### Statistics tell a story

The conference resumed on Saturday morning with a presentation of a sociological study on the attitudes of the Christian Reformed Church toward women in office. Dr. Peter De Jong, Calvin Professor of Sociology and Calvin student Carol Topp explained the survey that sociology students had completed.

The information was more than interesting. It turned out that 95% of the CRC members



Student Carol Topp and Professor Peter De Jong

out that the church likes to think of itself as being impervious to change. "We often talk about always meaning perhaps the last 200 years. Always does not always mean always," he said.

He reminded the audience that in 1957 women were allowed to vote in Christian Reformed churches. The effects of change are slow in coming, but even when we resist change, we change," he said.

Kromminga got a delayed outburst of laughter when he ended his speech by saying "The thought of change will make many of our present leaders turn in their grave."

### Pastoral

The fourth and final panelist, Rev. Marchiene Rienstra, former student at Calvin Seminary and present pastor of Port Sheldon United Presbyterian Church, spoke on pastoral change. She pointed out that everyone is somewhere on the spectrum of change. One cannot deal pastorally with a person unless one knows where the person is.

c) should this not be applied because it has no meaning anymore?

A person who checked off a) received 1 point, b) 2 points and c) three points. A total of 9 points for the nine texts meant a very conservative person, a total of 27 points meant a very liberal person, and the rest was somewhere in between.

### No bell curve

What was of interest too was the fact that the results did not show a bell curve, with most people in the middle. "It was more like a sloping plateau," said Dr. De Jong, indicating that when it came to the question of relativizing scripture passages a fair number would opt for a) or c).

De Jong added later that according to his own views and those of other sociologists, new experience have greater power to change people's minds than new ideas. "Like others, we Christian Reformed people go where our guts lead us not our minds. We need to implement changes before the majority will be comfortable with changes," he said.

### Much support, some frustration

After the coffee break, a panel of 4 women church "officers" talked about their experiences. "Women on the Cutting Edge" was the theme.

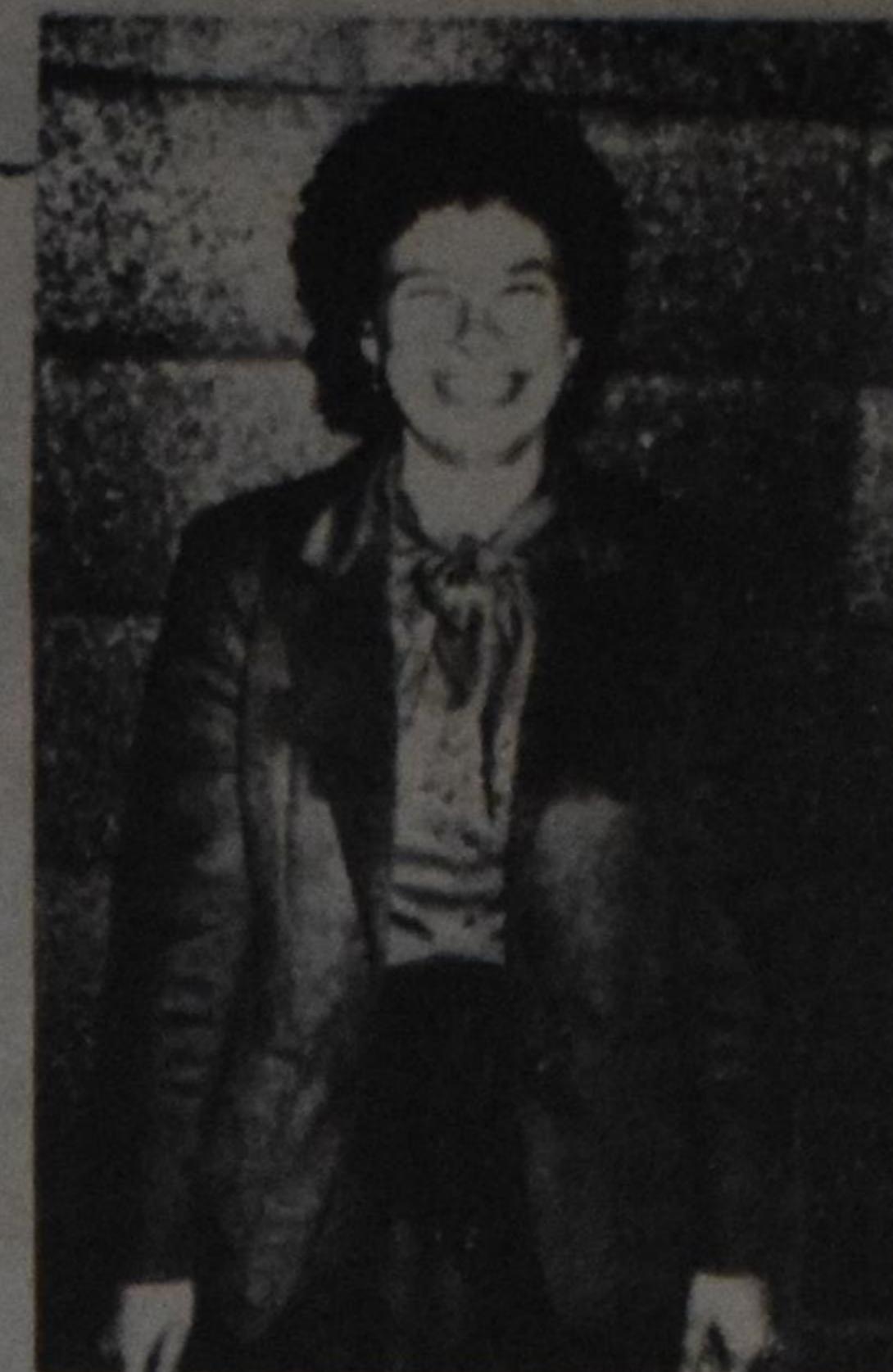
Beverley Meyers, Adjunct Elder at the Hope CRC Oak Forest, Ill., told the gathering that her work was like that of an elder, except she was not ordained, she could not vote. She thought of her three years of service as "a very tranquil time" because she experienced much support. There was a good deal of opposition from Classis, however.

Judy Plekker, Associate Deacon at Calvin CRC, Grand Rapids, also has no vote and was not ordained. She said that associate deacons were able to offer a degree of compassion not previously offered by deacons. She expressed a desire to live within the rules of Synod.

Jane VanderHaagen is a full-fledged deacon in the River Terrace CRC in East Lansing, Mich. She takes up collections, explains collections, offers prayer and is a full voting member of council.

She said this for her was a growing experience. The greatest challenge lay in helping people with finances. She feels more or less accepted, and is supported by her family and friends.

Leanne Van Dyk is not yet an officer of the church but hopes to become one. She is studying at Calvin Seminary. Although the academic, spiritual and social atmosphere is good at the seminary, she does experience unique pressures.



Rev. Marchiene Rienstra

She is subjected to more frequent moments of doubt and uncertainty than is good for her. She is never invited to preach anywhere. There is academic pressure to excel, to prove that women can do as well. She does not like to be stereotyped as a women's libber. Since the chances of her entering the ministry are bleak she finds it difficult to maintain a sense of balance between apathy and despair.

### The importance of ordination

In the afternoon the various churches that have women in office shared their history and current positions, under the theme "Churches on the Cutting Edge."

The presentation consisted mainly of reading of prepared papers with much detail. A general consensus was that it was time to ordain women to office.

After, Rev. William Brink, former Stated Clerk of the Christian Reformed Church, shared his reply and reaction to church experiences.

Rev. Brink emphasized a decision by Synod 1973 which "said some very basic things about the office of believer. This is the most important office," he said.

The question of ordination had been stressed too much, he felt. The audience uttered a loud groan when he said that ordination was not really important. It didn't matter to him whether he was ordained, instituted or appointed. He went on to stress the importance of maintaining denominational unity. He was afraid that to allow each church its own practice would result in having a congregational structure rather than a reformed/presbyterian structure.

He said that he was not against women in office, but added, "we should not place our denomination in jeopardy."

A lively discussion followed his remarks.

The conference came to a close with a joyful worship service that included communion under the auspices of Church of the Servant.

Many conferees testified afterwards that they had enjoyed the well organized and flowing conference.

# The Dutch marines celebrate

## William R. Rang

Marines have been very much in the news lately. British marines were involved in the Falklands war, American marines were massacred in Beirut while others took part in the Grenada affair. Since the Beirut onslaught, thousands of young Americans have flocked to the recruiting stations, eager to be part of that almost mystique organization called the United States Marine Corps.

The Marine mystique is not only American or British, it is uniquely Dutch as well. It is not surprising, therefore, that Canada is probably the only country in the free world where a group of veterans of another country has its own veterans' organization, that of the Royal Netherlands Marines.

## Happy birthday, Mariniers!

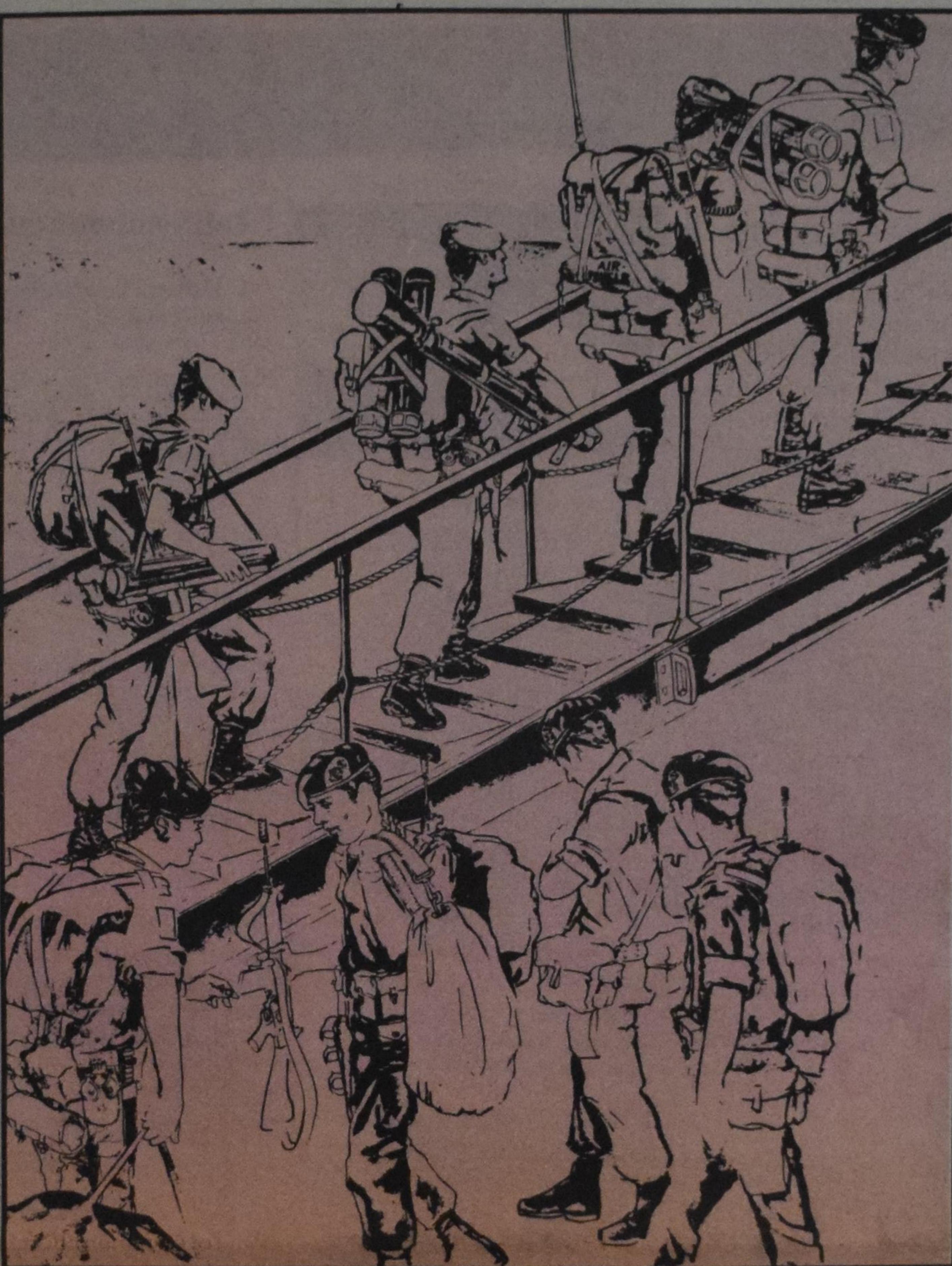
December 10 is a day special to any active marine or veteran since it marks the birthday of the Corps. On that date veterans from all over Canada will flock together for their annual reunion. They will be eating their favourite nasi goreng dish, vote for new executives, will have tall stories to tell and memories to rehearse. This year their number may well be close to two hundred while it is believed that their total in Ontario alone is well over that number ranging from regulars to colonels.

## Michiel de Ruyter

It was on December 10, 1665, that the Dutch Marine Corps was born. The well-known admiral Michiel de Ruyter was the father of this branch of the navy. Men were desperately needed to form landing parties, to man the guns on shipboard, and to police the often rowdy and undisciplined sailors. Specialists were needed to be the attackers when enemy ships were entered and battles on ships' decks were to be fought.

De Ruyter trained a group of men in whom he could combine all the required characteristics, that of soldiers as well as sailors. Finally the government gave its official approval and on December 10 the Corps became official.

Ironically, the British had their Marines before the Dutch did, but that must be attributed only to the fact that the Dutch have always been slow when it comes to making decisions relative to the defence of their country. In the question about being the first, it is difficult to argue which came first, the chicken or the egg (although as true Calvinists we believe



that the chicken came first), but it is fair to say that the father — possibly the step-father — of the United States Marines was none less than our "Boy from Vlissingen."

The birth of the Corps marked also the beginning of the change of tide for the Dutch in their wars against England. The first Commandant, Willem Joseph van Ghent, was even appointed admiral and as such commanded the squadron that sailed up the Thames estuary in 1667 as far as Gravesend and up the Medway to Rochester. An assault party, of which marines formed the nucleus, did a lot of damage to the costal batteries and the English warships that were anchored off Rochester.

Relationships between The Netherlands and England improved over the years and it was in 1704 that British and Dutch marines captured Gibraltar. The

rolls of the Dutch Marines at Gibraltar contain the same name as that of the writer of this article, but whether there really exists any kinship has not as yet been established.

## Rotterdam, May 1940

In 1934, a detachment of marines was sent to the Saarland as part of an international force to serve during the plebiscite. In May of 1940 the marines fought in Rotterdam and defeated an attempt by German forces to cross the Maas bridges. Because of their bravery and antics the Germans gave them the name "Black Devils" and treated them with respect following the capitulation. During the invasion in Normandy a detachment fought as part of the Princess Irene Brigade. After the war the Corps was greatly expanded and a Marine

Brigade was formed and took part in various campaigns in East Java.

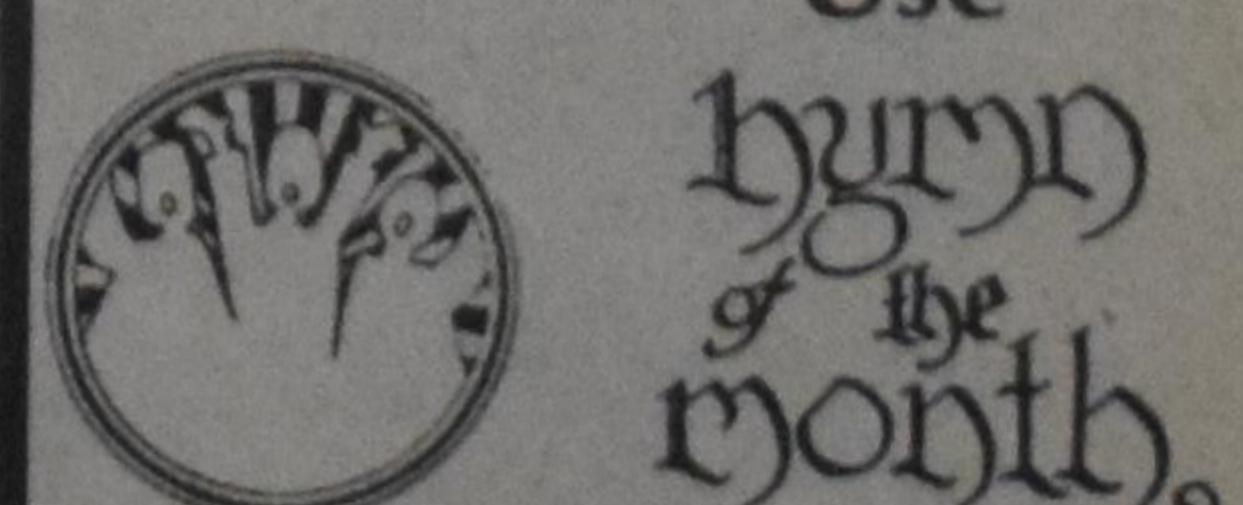
The Dutch are by nature a peace-loving people, but when it comes to defending their homeland, they can be vicious. It is not this viciousness that binds the veterans together, but their common experiences, their comradeship, their awareness of having belonged to an elite part of the Dutch military, one with a long and proud tradition. Surely, they are Michiel's Boys and they are proud of it.

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William Rang is an educator living in Dunnville, Ont.



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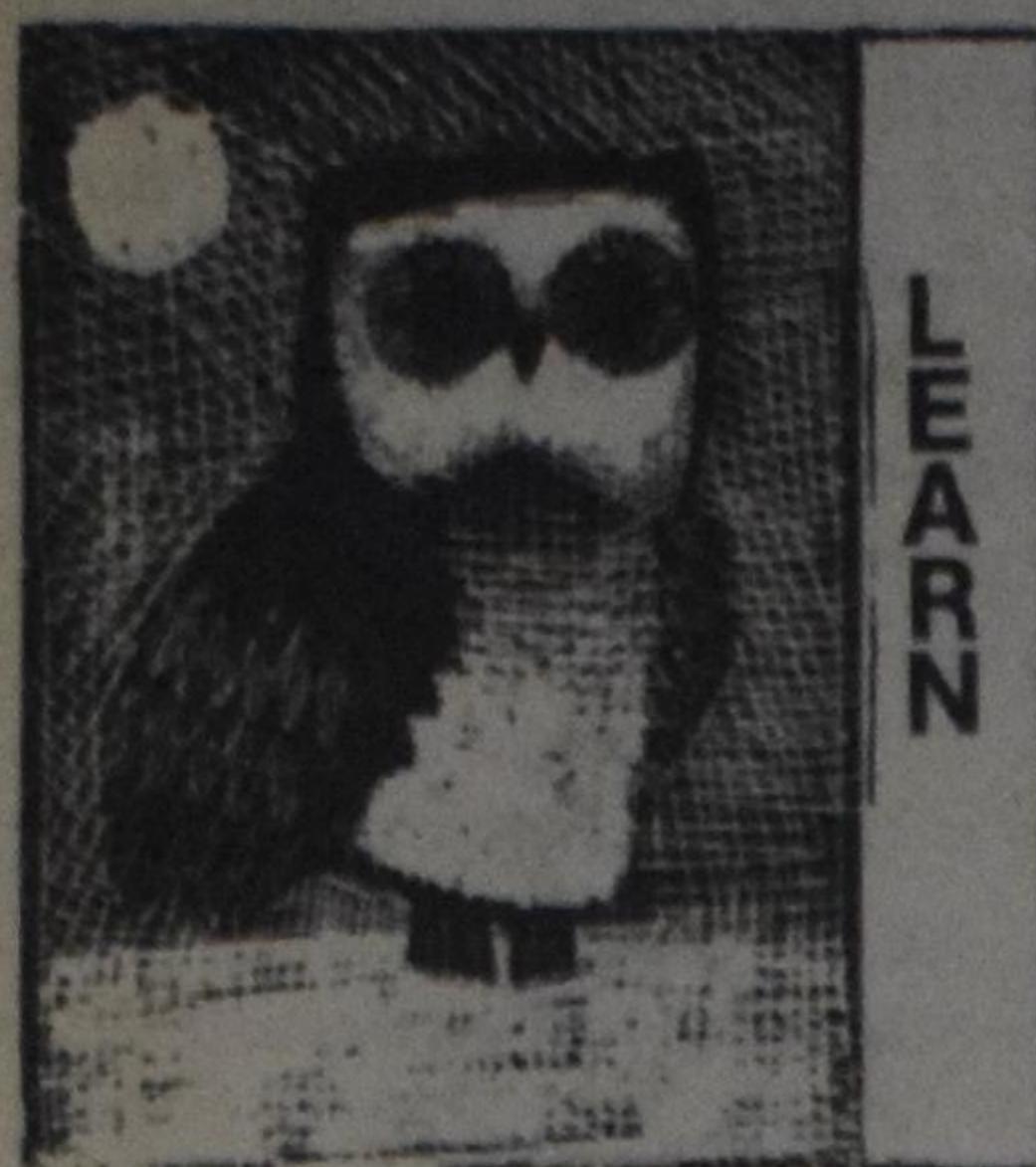


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### It's Advent season again

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### Unscramble Advent words



Advent means coming. It's a time of waiting for and anticipating Christ's coming.

Can you unscramble the letters below? All of them make words similar in meaning to Come or Anticipate.

1. prcaoph

2. pcectxe

3. raeapap

4. iwaat

5. avirer

6. okol wofadr ot

7. cadevan

8. pheo orf

9. rwda arne

10. ucotn no

#### Answers:

1. approach
2. expect
3. appear
4. await
5. anticipate
6. look forward to
7. advance
8. hope for
9. draw near
10. count on

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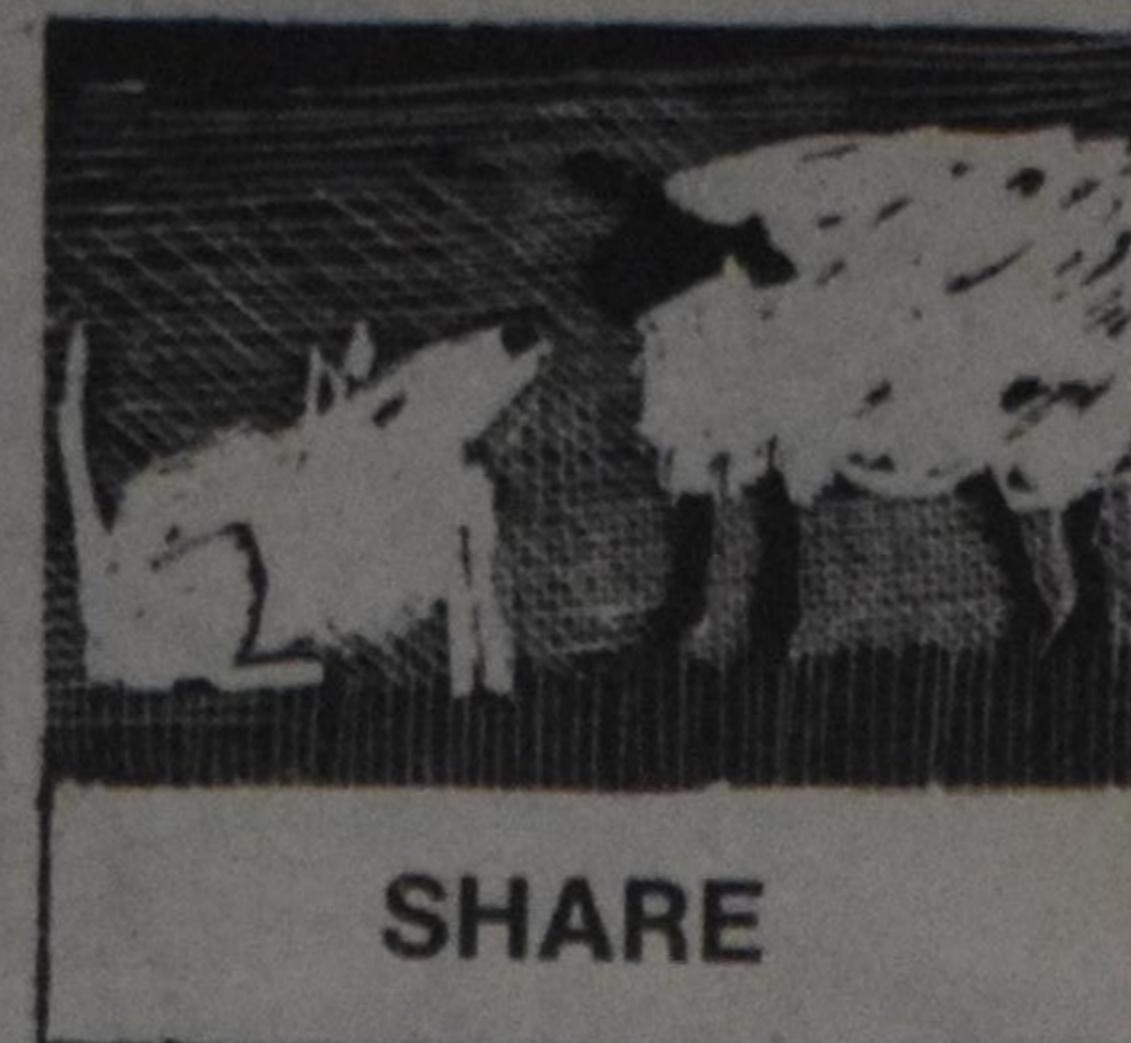
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### Ten symbolic decorations for your tree

**1. Dove:** The dove is a symbol of peace.

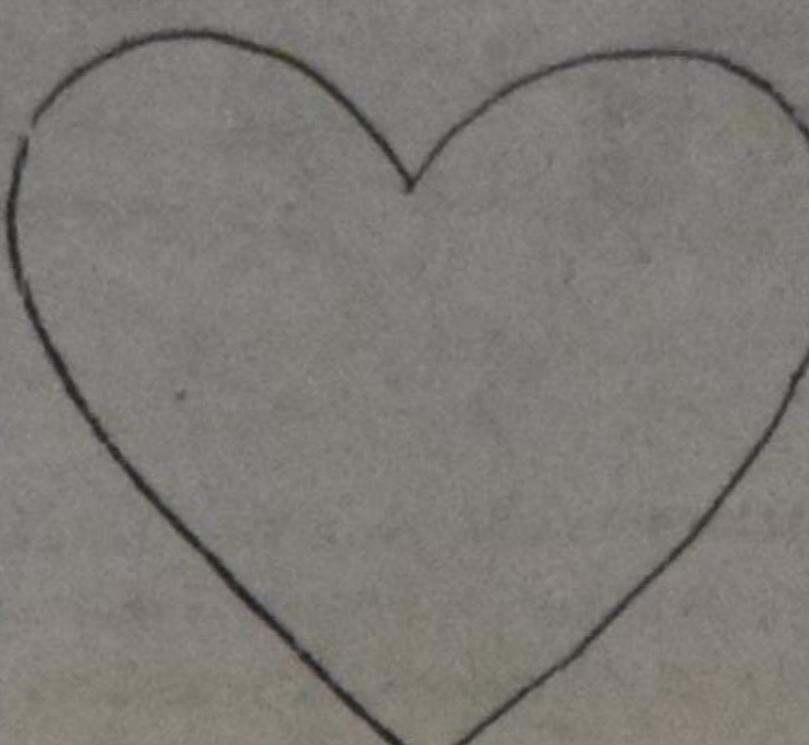
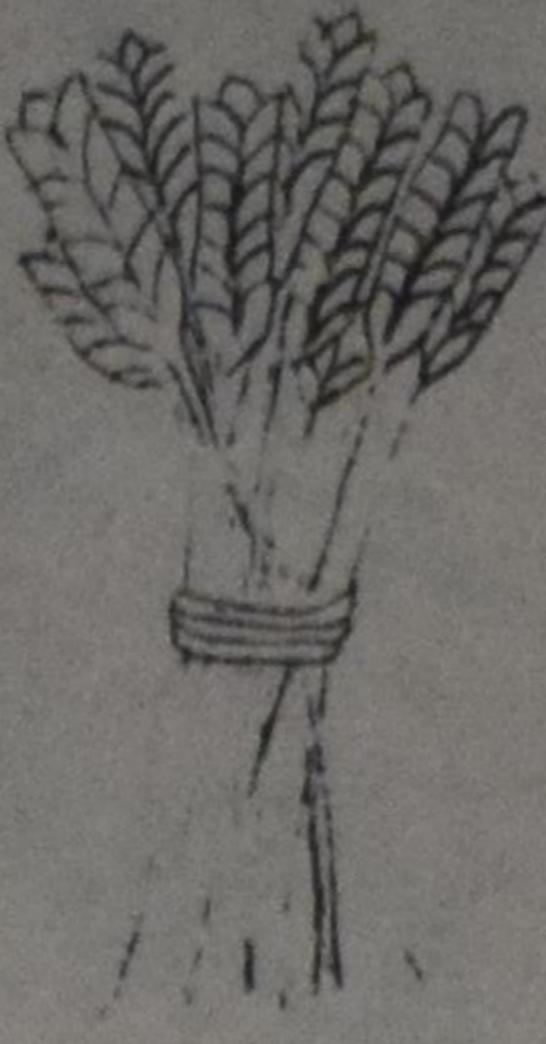
Trace and cut out of white cardboard the shape of a dove. Colour in only the eyes.



#### 2. Sheaf of Wheat:

Jesus is the Bread of Life.

Try to find 7 or 8 stalks of wheat (from the florist or hobby shop) and cut them to 20 cm. Tie them together with gold cord. Or draw and cut out a bundle of wheat.



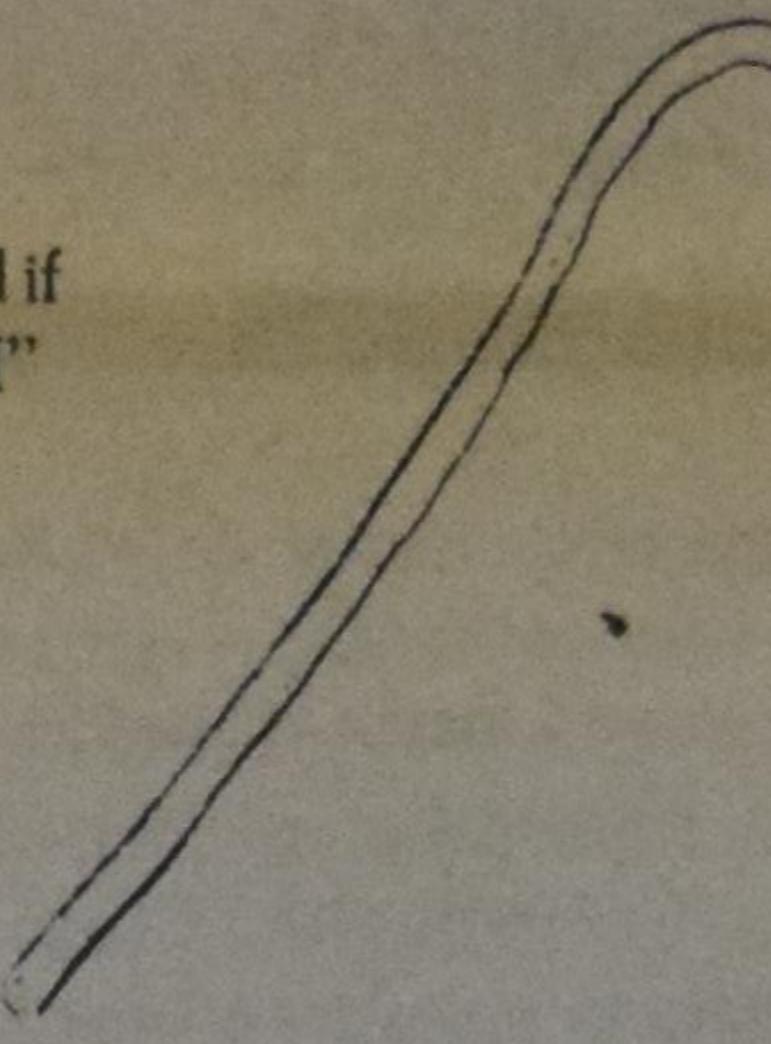
#### 4. Heart:

The heart stands for Jesus' mother. Through Mary, God sent His love to the world. Cut out a heart from cardboard, red if you have it. Glue a gold or silver "M" on both sides of the heart.



#### 7. Three Crowns:

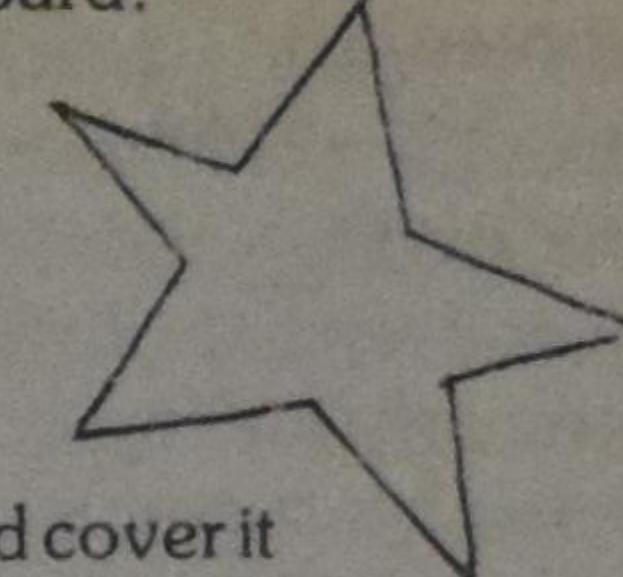
To represent the 3 Wise Men seeking Jesus. Cut three crowns from gold paper, or white cardboard, and decorate. Hang them together on the tree.



#### 6. Shepherd's Crook:

The crook is the sign of shepherds. Christ is the Good Shepherd.

Wrap a candy cane with masking or decorator tape. Or cut a cane from cardboard.



#### 8. Star:

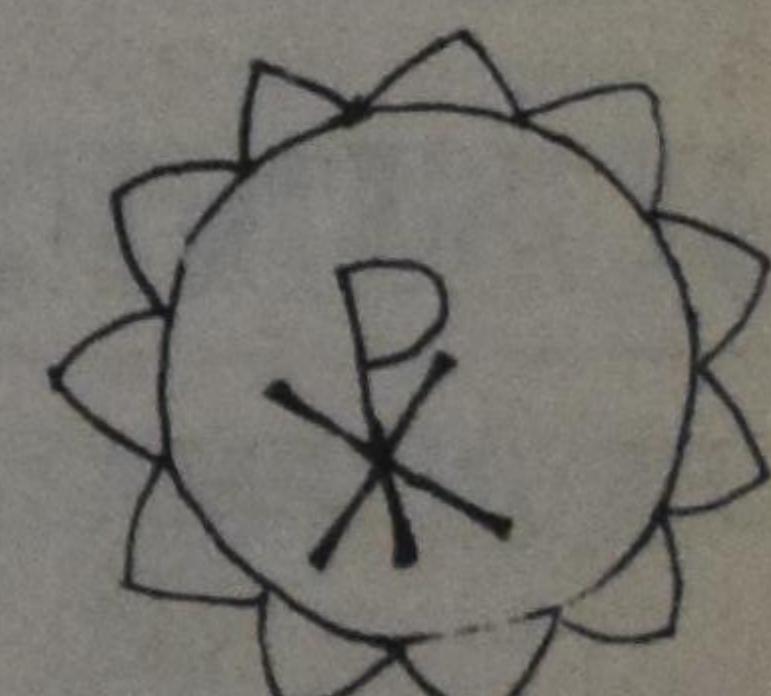
The star is the symbol of God's guidance. Cut a star from cardboard and cover it with tin foil.



Get three 20 cm squares of netting or other cloth and draw a string of gold colour close to the edges through the netting. Fill one sack with coins and the other two with incense. You may find incense at a gift or hobby shop.

**10. Sun:** The sun is the symbol of Christ. He is the light of the world.

Make a star with rays from gold or yellow cardboard. Cut out the letters PX and glue to the star. PX is a symbol for Christ.



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## Story

# Are you ready for Christmas?

### Hilda Wielemaker

Janice woke up with a feeling of frustration mingled with determination. She got up, vigorously brushed her long blond hair as if to rid herself of bothersome thoughts. But it didn't help. Her mind was in a turmoil. Everywhere she went she heard, "Are you ready for Christmas?"

Christmas shopping, Christmas parties, Christmas everything. Peace on earth ... a frenzy of preparations. Joy to the world ... worried frowns and overdrawn accounts.

What had become of the real Christmas spirit? The joyful celebration of Christ's birth?

If only she could talk with somebody about her frustrations. Find a kindred heart.

Her parents? She had tried that last year. They were too preoccupied with their own affairs.

Kevin? He was a good friend but she wasn't sure of his sympathy.

Janice put the hairbrush away and went downstairs. Her mother was already bustling around the kitchen, getting out the ingredients for holiday cookies. Janice had to find a clear spot on the table to put her cereal bowl. It was only eight o'clock and her mother already looked worn out.

"I'm glad you're up early, I'll need your help," she said.

When Janice started to explain she had plans, her mother interrupted, "I'm sure that you had your own plans but you know how hectic this time of year is."

Janice heaved a sigh. But then, on second thought, it wasn't so bad after all. Maybe there'd be a chance for a heart to heart talk while they worked together.

After breakfast they started with the baking.

Most of the conversation was about recipes and ingredients. Every time Janice started on a personal level there was an interruption.

First her father came in. As president of the Golf Club he was responsible for the evening's Christmas dinner. He reminded her mother to buy wrapping paper for the door prize. Then the telephone rang. Next a delivery at the door.

With each interruption Janice could feel the tension building up. Her mother snapped at her for spilling some sugar and grumbled at the resistant cookie dough.

At last the cakes were in the oven and the cookies rolled out. "Finally!" Mrs. Mastin sighed. "Let's hurry and decorate the tree yet before I have my hair done."

While Janice stuck the artificial branches in the proper holes of the trunk, her mother rapidly unpacked the ornaments and spread them out on the table.

Janice glanced at her mother. She noticed the worried frown and the drawn lips. She watched the hands work with an almost feverish urgency. Silent she cried, "Oh, Mom. This used to be such an enjoyable job. What's wrong? Are you running yourself ragged to impress your friends, or are you worried about the Christmas expenses?"

Her eyes wandered from her mother to the colourful array on the table. She spotted an old decoration she made years ago; a lopsided cardboard bell. The aluminum foil covering was torn but the colourful beads and fancy lace still showed the love and care that had gone into the making.

She picked it up tenderly. "Remember this, Mom?" she asked.

Her mother smiled. "Oh yes," she answered. "I can still see you patiently stitching away at it."

Janice said, "I can remember picking the beads and lace off that green brocade dress you bought at a rummage sale for a quarter."

"A lot has changed since then. Sometimes I wonder if it's all for the better — sometimes I wish ..." Mother's voice trailed off. With a wishful smile she stared into space, her busy schedule momentarily forgotten.

She looks so pretty when she's relaxed, Janice thought. She walked over and touched mother's cheek. Hesitantly she started, "Mom, we could ..." but that's as far as she got.

Mrs. Mastin was jolted out of her day dream. "Oh dear, look at the time! I have to hurry for the hairdresser's appointment." She jumped up, "Will you finish the baking and the tree?"

Tears of frustration burned behind Janice's eyes.

Gone was the moment of intimacy. Gone the opportunity to talk.

By the time Janice put a new batch of cookies in the oven her mother was ready to leave. She halted at the front door and asked hurriedly, "When you're through, would you run down to Woolco's for wrapping paper please? Be sure to get something nice." Then she was gone.

Sadly Janice watched her drive away. Her eyes wondered across the street to the Benson's house. She wondered how they were going to celebrate Christmas this year. Mr. Benson

was unemployed. The plant where he worked for 13 years had closed down and he couldn't find another job.

Their eight-year-old daughter, Kathy, was outside looking lonely and forlorn. Janice went to the door and called, "Hey, Kathy, do you want some homemade cookies?"

Almost guiltily Janice thought of the extensive, and still growing grocery list on the bulletin board beside their own telephone.

At long last everything was done and Janice sent Kathy home with a bag of cookies. She donned her coat and boots and went off to Woolco's for the wrapping paper.

Kevin and the hot chocolate had a calming effect. After a few sips Janice smiled and said, "That newspaper wrapping episode was embarrassing."

"But why?" countered Kevin. "I thought it was pretty original."

"Probably. But I didn't do it to be original," said Janice. "It was a protest against the waste and greediness that has invaded



Kathy saw the frenzy and materialism of Christmas preparations and wondered what had become of the joyful celebration of Christ's birth?



With a happy smile, Kathy dashed across the street. "You can help with the Christmas tree too if you like," Janice said as she invited Kathy in.

Kathy didn't need encouragement. She chatted about everything as they worked. She said that they wouldn't have many presents this year. "I don't mind that," she said. "Christmas can be just as much fun without a lot of things, don't you think?"

"Yes, of course." Janice answered absentmindedly and thought, "out of the mouth of babes..."

"I don't like to go with mom to the grocery store anymore, though," said Kathy. "She takes too long comparing prices and hardly buys any goodies."

There was a wide variety to choose from. The economy kind looked good enough to her since it was destined for the waste basket anyway but, knowing her mother, her hand reached for the classy stuff.

"Hi, beautiful, have you decided against newspaper wrapping this year?" a familiar voice asked from behind.

Janice felt a hot blush spreading over her cheeks. All the pent-up emotions rushed to the surface. With a quivering voice she said, "Kevin, I'll cry if you tease me about that now."

"Sorry, Janice. I didn't know it was a touchy subject," Kevin said. "Let me apologize by buying you a hot chocolate."

Janice nodded her consent. The combination of a contrite

Christmas. By wrapping my gifts in newspaper I saved \$3.50. That money went in the church's special Christmas collection for food hampers. I felt so brave and noble but everybody laughed at me. That sure let the air out of my bubble."

"O.K. But that was a year ago," said Kevin. "And, apparently, you don't want to try again," pointing at the roll of wrapping paper she'd bought.

Continued on page 14 ...

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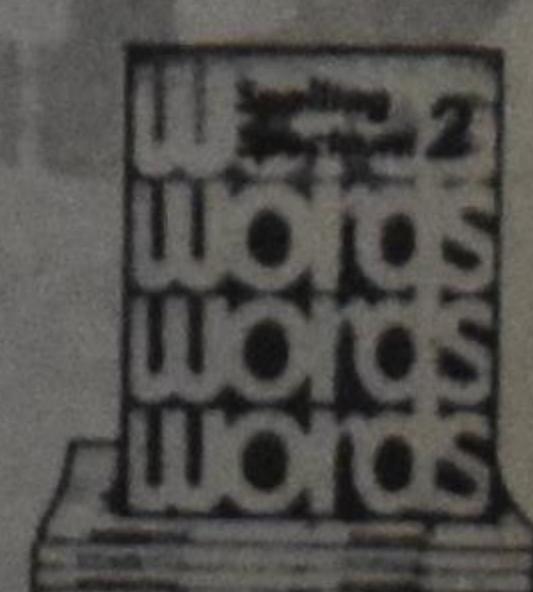
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# The Bishops and their ethical reflections on the economic crisis



Syt Wolters

## Pensive Dutchie

Beware! Pensive Dutchie is going to walk on slippery ice. Some have said that the "Bishops" should stick to church work, like preaching the gospel and saving souls, but not meddle in something which is not "their field." Not without trembling I venture to say a thing or two about what the Bishops are talking about. I am not an economist nor a preacher. I am just one of the "men in the street."

To begin with, I do not have a definition of what economics is. I have read several definitions many of them so complex that I cannot even understand them. So I have acquired my own idea of what economics is about. For a great deal it boils down to "what we eat, what we drink, and what we shall put on."

There seems to be an awful lot of worry about these things. Many volumes have been written; many theories developed and the most keen minds have busied themselves with this issue. And so far,

nobody seems to have come up with the ideal solution for the problem.

We all know that our current economy is in a bad state of affairs. No wonder all kinds of people add their bit toward a solution to the problem. I think, that's why the Bishops jumped on the bandwagon of those who feel co-responsible for the situation we are in.

In the course of several years I have, on my own, read a few things about economics. Most of what I have read and heard, seems to be on the horizontal level. I find that in all these discussions and debates about economics, we deal only with the relationship of man to man.

I said earlier that for me economy is about "what we eat and drink and what we shall put on." And I read in Matthew 6 that Jesus tells his church, that his children should NOT worry about these things. As in between brackets, He adds: that's what the heathens do. But you, my children; you, citizens of my kingdom, you seek first my kingdom and its righteousness; and all your needs in eating, drinking and clothing will be yours as well.

What I miss in most of these economic discussions and debates is that vertical line of love. It all boils down to the basic constitutional law of the Kingdom: Love

God with all your heart, with all your mind and with all your strength; in short with every sinew of existence, with every fibre of your being, focus on your love to God. Then loving your neighbour falls into place. If we surrender totally to God with all our love and entire being, we won't have trouble loving our neighbour, even if he is a drunk or a murderer. If we love God, that is, if we live by the Ten Commandments as the spherical atmosphere in which we breathe, then the problem of economics is on the way of solution already.

What strikes me time and again, that that vertical line of love hardly is mentioned as a pre-requisite for the solution of our problems. I cannot expect this from secular writers or economists or politicians, because this solution can only be understood by faith and only to whom it has been given, can it be clear as day.

I've read the Bishops' statement. Only in every general term does it refer to the Gospel, but nowhere in the context of love to God in the first place. No wonder that it ends up flirting with marxist ideas. Even in some of christian critiques of what the Bishops say, I find no reference to that "vertical" pre-requisite of love God above all and in the first place.

On the basis of that love I believe

that not only persons, but also associations, institutions, and governments have to love their neighbour as themselves. Managements should, for the sake of love to God above all, love their employees as themselves. Even internationally: for the sake of the love to God above all, the nations must love each other as themselves. If the nations had done this we would not have had "hungry nations" or nations who gobble up most of the earth's resources.

Of course, when I say this, some people respond: but you are too idealistic. You must reckon with raw reality. My only answer is: We don't have to reform the world. That is not our task. Because Jesus Christ has been given all authority our task is only: to preach the Gospel and to teach the nations all what He has commanded us.

How that will turn out? Quite well, because Jesus says in the same text: I will be with you till the end of the age.

As I have said before: nothing in this world is more irresistible than an obedient communion of saints, come what may.

## Are you ready for Christmas?



Continued from page 13.

"This is for my mother." Her face registered uncertainty. Should she tell Kevin more?

He seemed to notice her hesitation and said gently, "What else is on your mind?"

His obvious concern broke her resistance and she poured out all her frustrations. About her growing awareness of the fickle Christmas celebrations and about her need for love and sharing. She ended with, "There must be another way to celebrate Christmas. Any suggestions, Kevin?"

"Count me out," he answered after a short pause. "I respect your feelings but I find it easier to go along with the crowd."

"Well," thought Janice wryly, "At least I know where I stand: Alone!"

Later in the evening Janice felt worse than ever. After a hurried farewell her parents left for the golf club Christmas dinner with a gaily wrapped door prize. Janice stayed behind facing a solitary meal of re-heated stew.

When she got up to close the curtains, her eyes were drawn to the Benson's house. It was all lit up. Not a curtain closed.

Upstairs, Mr. Benson threw a pyjama-clad Bobby in the air. He caught the boy and hugged him. Then the two disappeared from view and Janice sensed that they had knelt to pray.

Then it hit Janice. She had been knocking at the wrong doors all along. She folded her hands and prayed, "God, please forgive me. I should have come to you in the first place. I don't know how to handle this alone. I want to serve you but I also want to please my parents and friends. I want to help the Bensons, although, in some ways they are richer than us. I don't know what to do. Please God..."

The turmoil in Janice's mind gradually diminished. She wondered what she had been so uptight about. The important thing was that she followed her own conscience. Maybe her family and friends would catch on, maybe not, but that was not really her concern. If she gave

gifts from the heart they would certainly appreciate them.

She could design her own Christmas cards with a promise of a specific "service of love" written inside. She got her notebook and jotted a few ideas down: Window washing for Mom, a day of typing or other office work for Dad, baby-sitting the two nephews — two gifts in one — the boys a day at the zoo on "Kiddie's day," her sister a day of freedom.

She could also go to yard or garage sales for cheap craft materials to make place mats, stuffed toys, pencil cases, beach bags, etc. The list was endless.

An hour later Janice went upstairs. She brushed her teeth and washed her face in preparation for the night. When she dried herself, she looked in the mirror and said, "You're going to do it, Janice Mastin! You really are! Gifts of love for family and friends with money to spare for a Christian turkey for the Bensons."

Her reflection looked right back at her with a smile and seemed to say, "That's the spirit, Janice. Now you're ready for Christmas!"



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Hilda Wielemaker and her husband Tony, live in Trenton, Ont. They are part of a team of youth advisors for the Ebenezer Chr. Ref. Church.

# Classifieds

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## THANKS

**LINKER:** We would like to express our sincere thanks to everyone who shared with us their love and concern with the passing away of our dear husband, father and grandfather. Also for the many cards and letters.

Your Christian sympathy and friendship is very much appreciated and will always be remembered.

Mrs. Jantje Linker & family, Strathroy, Ont.

## BIRTHS

**HAANSTRA:** With thankfulness to God, we, John and Debbie, thank our heavenly Father for entrusting to our care the precious gift of a daughter, LEANNE JOY, 9 lbs. 2 oz., born November 17, 1983. A welcomed sister for Marsha, Ronnie, Daryl, Adrian and Steven. Eighth grandchild for Mr. and Mrs. W. Van Herk, Caistor Centre, and twenty-second grandchild for Mr. and Mrs. H. Haanstra, York. R.R.#1, Caistor Centre, ON L0R 1E0.

**KATER:** "The Lord hath done great things for us: whereof we are glad" (Psalm 126:3). Our family has been blessed by the birth of a daughter, KRISTEN JOY, born on November 20, 1983. A sister for Jason, Andrea, and Stephen.

Sally and Henry Kater, 57 Main St., N., Jarvis, ON N0A 1J0

**SCHINKEL:** Tim and Marian, with great joy and thankfulness to the Lord, announce the arrival of our daughter, JESSICA ANN, on November 12, 1983, weighing 8 lbs. 6 oz. Proud grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. J. Verroen of Wyoming, Ont., and Mr. and Mrs. H. Schinkel of Essex, Ont. R.R.#2, Glanworth, ON N0L 1L0

## BIRTH

**DROST:** It is with joy and thanksgiving in our hearts that we, John and Linda, wish to announce that on November 24, 1983, we welcomed home our third child, a daughter. JULIE LYNN was born on October 30, 1983, weighing 4 lb. 4 oz. We thank the Lord for watching over, and protecting her. Julie Lynn is a sister for Angela and Dianne, and another grandchild for Mr. and Mrs. K.R. Drost of Listowel, Ont., and Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Hoftyzer of Moorefield, Ont. R.R.#3, Listowel, ON N4W 3G8

**VAN GEEST:** We, Neil and Mary-Jane thank the Lord for entrusting to our care our fourth child, DUANE NEIL, born on November 10, 1983. Duane is a little brother for Kevin, Ryan and Karen. Happy grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. J. VandenBerg of Caistor Centre and Mr. and Mrs. A. Van Geest of Grimsby. 265 Kerman Ave., Grimsby, ON L3M 3W3.

## MARRIAGES

**JOLDERSMA-JOSSE:** Recognizing the love between man and woman as a gift from the Lord, we, Mrs. Trudy Joldersma of Hamilton, Ont., and Mr. and Mrs. Harry and Lammie Jossie of Sarnia, Ont., thankfully announce the forthcoming marriage of our children TRUDY-ANNE and BILL. The wedding ceremony will take place D.V., on December 17, 1983, at 3:30 p.m. at Redeemer Chr. Ref. Church, Sarnia, Ont. Future address: 356 Brigdon Side Rd., Sarnia, ON N7T 7H3

**MEIMA-DEVRIES:** Mr. and Mrs. A. Meima of Whitby are happy to announce the forthcoming marriage of their oldest daughter, SYLVIA to FRED, son of Mr. and Mrs. C. Devries of Bowmanville. The wedding will take place, the Lord willing, on Friday, December 16, 1983, at 6:30 p.m. in Hebron Chr. Ref. Church, Whitby, Ont. Rev. R.G. Fisher and Rev. J. Zantingh officiating. Future address: 30 Wellington St., Bowmanville, ON L1C 1V2.

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## ANNIVERSARIES

1958 November 28 1983  
 With joy and thankfulness to the Lord we were happy to celebrate the 25th Wedding Anniversary of our parents and grandparents.

**ALBERT and ELLY BEEKSMA  
 (nee Vandenbergh)**

We pray that the Lord may continue to bless and keep them in his loving care for many more years to come.

Congratulations Dad and Mom, Grandpa and Grandma.

With love from your children and grandchild:

Marian & Harry VanderMeulen; Kristina

Yvonne & Leo Noort

Connie Beeksma

Trevor Beeksma

Home address: 5044 Linden Dr., Ladner, BC V4K 3A3

## ANNIVERSARIES

"This is the day that the Lord hath made."

**DR. REMKES and JEANETTE KOOISTRA  
 (nee Feddema)**

will be married for 40 years on December 15, 1983, D.V.

Your children thank our heavenly Father for all the happy years. It is our prayer that you may continue to be blessed for many more years to come.

Love and congratulations:  
 Dorothy & John Kraft; Jason, Gerard — Ottawa, Ont.

Gail & John Kooistra — Ottawa, Ont.

Joanne & Clarence Kooistra; Remy, Rhys — Prince George, BC  
 Jacky & Theo Vandeputte; Jody, Denise, Robin, Casey, Michelle, Russell — Brantford, Ont.

You are invited to celebrate this occasion with them during a reception on Saturday, December 17, from 2:00 - 5:00 p.m. in the faculty of St. Paul's College, University of Waterloo (Westmount entrance) in Waterloo. Home address: 453 Albert St., Unit 12, Waterloo, ON N2L 5A7

**Rozenburg, Holland** Chino, California 1938 1983

"Fear not, for I am with you" (Isaiah 4:1-10).

With gratitude to God we celebrated the 45th Wedding Anniversary of our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents.

**KLAAS and HENDRIKA VAN VLIET  
 (nee Weeda)**

on November 15, 1983. We hope that they will be spared for each other and for us for many years.

Norman & Marie Vermeer — Caldwell, Idaho

Jacob & Anne-Marie Van Vliet — Oakdale, Ca.

Nick & Thelma Van Vliet — Chino, Ca.

Dale & Nellie Ruisch — Malin, Or.

Arend & Norma Jean Van Vliet — Oakdale, Ca.

25 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren.

16931 Johnson Ave., Chino, California 91710

## OBITUARIES

The Lord called home our dear husband, father, son and brother,

**UBEL BOSMAN**

in his 42nd year.

Loving husband of: Rhoda Bosman - nee Rome.

Dear father of:

Angelina

Sandra

April

Son of: John H. Bosman and the late Angelina Bosman.

Brother of:

Jane & Gerry Ensing

Janat & John Wiebenga

Frits & Julie Bosman

Teresa Angelina

The service was held at the Chr. Ref. Church, 287 Water St., Guelph, on Saturday, November 19, 1983.

Interment: Woodland Cemetery.

Op 16 November, 1983, in Holland,

voor ons toch nog onverwachts, heeft de Heere van ons genomen Zijn kind, onze lieve broer, zwager en oom,

**SIETSE VANDERTUIN**

op de leeftijd van 78 jaar, na een gelukkig huwelijk van 50 jaar.

"Wij weten dat wanneer deze aardse tabernakel wordt afgebroken, wij een gebouw hebben niet met handen gemaakt, maar eeuwig in de hemel."

Mr. & Mrs. Fred Bosgraaf (v/d Tuin) — Ridgeville

Mr. & Mrs. Bill Bosgraaf — Niagara Falls

Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Groenewegen — Stoney Creek

Mr. & Mrs. Hank Bosgraaf — Fonthill

## OBITUARIES

"Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb: And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry and will deliver you" (Isaiah 46:3-4).

The Lord took home after a short illness

**MRS. ALICE VISSER  
 (nee Muizelaar)**

of Taber, beloved wife of the late Mr. Klaas Visser, passed away in Calgary on Tuesday, November 15, 1983 at the age of 79 years. She was born in Holland on January 20, 1904. She was predeceased by her husband on March 16, 1981.

She is survived by three daughters: Mrs. John (Agnes) Slomp — Brooks Mrs. Harry (Jenny) Stolk — Taber Mrs. Diny Geertsma — Taber

Four sons:

Klaas (Grace) — Taber

Hans (Lena) — Taber

Dick (Marilyn) — Taber

Morris — Taber

Four sisters and one brother — Holland

41 grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren.

Besides her husband she was predeceased by one sister and one brother.

The funeral service was held in the Taber Chr. Ref. Church on Saturday, November 19 at 2:00 p.m. with Rev. J. Corvers officiating. Interment followed in the Taber Memorial Garden.

Correspondence address: Box 659, Taber, AB T0K 2G0

On November 15, 1983, the Lord took suddenly out our mids our dearly beloved member:

**MRS. ALICE VISSER  
 (Muizelaar)**

Her happiness and friendliness will never be forgotten by us.

May the Lord comfort her children and family with the knowledge that she is now in the eternal rest, with her Lord.

The Friendship Circle of Taber, Alberta.

On Wednesday, November 30, 1983, the Lord took unto himself, into eternal Glory, our dear brother and brother-in-law,

**WILLIAM DE JONG**

Dearly beloved husband of Margaret de Jong-Van As.

"Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

Samuel & Jannetje de Jong — Elst, Holland

Wilma & Aart van Breemen — St. Catharines

Annie & Henry Boers — St. Catharines

Barbara & Henry Biemold — Linden, Washington

Predeceased by his brothers, Arie, Eldert, Piet, Dirk.

Home address: 15 Kirby Ave., Greensville, ON L9H 5L2.

## PERSONAL

Oudere weduwnaar, gerieflijk, 2 slaapkamer huis, 5 miles van Chr. Ref. Church, in S.W. Ontario, zoekt levenspartner die met hem samen wil wonen. Hulp voor huishoudelijk werk en de was aanwezig, als dat nodig is. Brieven onder #4783, Calvinist Contact, 99 Niagara St., St. Catharines, ON L2R 4L3.



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## PERSONAL

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AHRENS, Heinrich, naar Canada vertrokken in 1951 met de Waterman met bestemming Edmonton, Alberta.

BARTELTS, Fredericus Lambertus Maria, geboren op 16 februari 1950 te Breda, naar Canada vertrokken in 1967, laatst bekende adres: c/o 743 Banning St., Winnipeg 10 (Man), correspondentie terugvragen van boven genoemd adres met mededeling "moved to B.C." mogelijk als adres: 1626 McKenzie Ave., Victoria, B.C.

BONS, George Frederik Hendrik, geboren op 20 december 1918 te Rotterdam, laatst bekende adres in Nederland: Bahreinstraat 16b, Rotterdam, naar Canada vertrokken op 9 april 1955.

GROM, Jacobus Wilhelmus Anthonius, geboren op 27 september 1917, laatst bekende adres in Nederland: Kraalerstraat 9b, Rotterdam, naar Canada vertrokken op 12 mei 1952.

# Classifieds

## CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

**BLEKKENHORST:** We wish all our friends and relatives a Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The J. Blekkenhorst family, Georgetown.

**BOONSTRA:** Langs deze weg wensen wij onze familie en vrienden een gezegende Kerst toe en een voorspoedig 1984.

Mr. & Mrs. John Boonstra, Sr., R.R. 1, Telkwa, BC V0J 2X0

**GRIFFIOEN:** Family Jake Griffioen would like to wish all their family and friends God's joy at Christmas and his peace in the New Year.

Jake, Audrey, Margaret, Linda and Jake Jr., Cannington, Ont.

**LOUTER:** Herman and Grace Louter wish all their friends and relatives a Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Bramalea, Ont.

**KNIGHT:** Mrs. Gertrude Knight likes this opportunity to wish her children, grandchildren, relatives, and friends a Blessed Christmas and a Happy and Peaceful 1984.

764 Welland Rd., Fenwick, L0S 1C0

**SANDY BAY COTTAGES:** R.R.#1, Hastings, ON K0L 1Y0; (705) 696-2951. Art, Sue and Di wish to thank all their new friends and customers for making our first season a special one! Merry Christmas and best wishes for 1984.

**STERINGA:** Mr. and Mrs. P. Steringa te Brampton, Ont., Trinity Tower, Apt. 308, wensen familie, vrienden en bekenden een gezegend kerstfeest en een gelukkig nieuwjaar.

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Experienced **sales driver** wanted on flower and plant route. Send resume to: Box #4784, Calvinist Contact, 99 Niagara St., St. Catharines, ON L2R 4L3.

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## OPPORTUNITIES

**The Town of Ponoka** has a population of 5,000 people. It is located on Highway #2, South of Edmonton and North of Red Deer. Its economy relates to excellent farming facilities. Cattle, dairy, hog, grain and mixed farming. Many farms are for sale. Ponoka's economy also relates to the presence of a Provincial Mental Hospital with 6-800 employees. There are excellent school facilities in Ponoka. There is an interdenominational Christian School with grades 1-9. Churches in Ponoka include a small but growing Christian Reformed Church.

For more information write or call: Mr. Don Feitsma, Box 1807, Ponoka, AB T0C 2H0; tel: 783-5368.

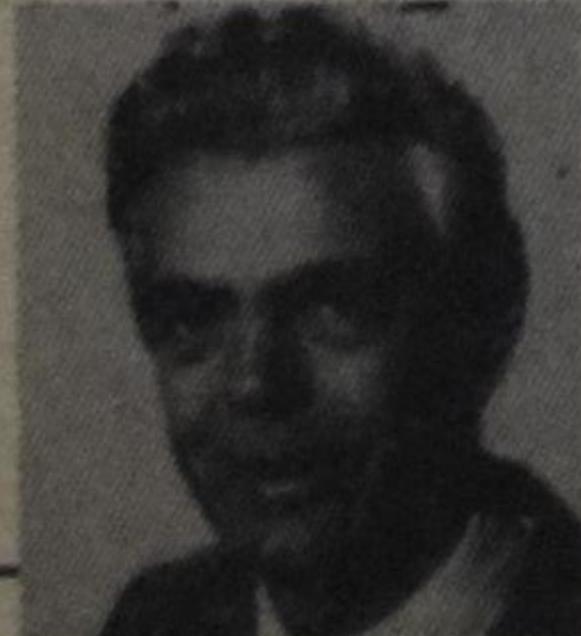
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VCSS invites inquiries from persons interested in the principalship of the school. Applicants must be articulate Christians, should show an interest in curriculum development, have proven administrative ability, and be able to understand supporters and parents of varying Christian backgrounds.

Inquiries should be directed to:

Search Committee  
**Vancouver Christian Secondary School**  
3496 Haida Drive, Vancouver, BC V5M 3Z4

## TEACHERS

**BOWMANVILLE:** Knox Christian School invites applications for a **Grade 7** teaching position. Duties to commence **Immediately** or no later than January 1, 1984. Send applications to: Knox Christian School, c/o J.W. Van Manen, Principal, R.R.1, Bowmanville, ON L1C 3K2; telephone: (416) 623-5871 (school) or 728-1030 (home).

**CHATHAM:** Chatham District Christian Secondary School requires a part-time **Art Teacher** to teach an art course from January 30, 1984 till June 15, 1984. If interested, please contact the principal H. Proper, at 90 Park Ave., E., Chatham, ON N7M 3B4 or please phone: (519) 352-4591 (school).

**GEORGETOWN:** The Georgetown District Chr. School is in need of a **grade 3** teacher as of March 1, 1984. Applicants with a major or minor in French are especially invited to apply. Please send applications to the Principal, George Petrusma, R.R.#1, Georgetown, ON L7G 4S4. Phone 877-4221 (office) 877-6444 (res.)

**LONDON:** The London Parental Christian School requires a part-time (1 day per week) **music teacher**, starting January 2, 1984. Send applications to: Mr. H. Goodhoofd, principal, 202 Clarke Rd., London, ON N5W 5E4 or phone: (519) 455-0360 (school), (519) 434-7284 (home).

**STRATHROY:** John Calvin Christian School may have a possible opening for the **grade 3** teaching position starting January 2, 1984. Please send letters of application, resume and references to: Mr. Henry D. Wiersema, Principal, 48 York St., Strathroy, ON N7G 2E3; phone: (519) 245-1934 (school), (519) 289-5562 (home).



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## TEACHERS

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# Events

## Calendar

Dec. 18	Brampton Chr. Choral Society presents Christmas Cantata "Story of Bethlehem" at 8 p.m. in Second CRC of Brampton.
Dec. 17	Christmas Concert by the Choirs & Brass directed by Leendert Kooy at 8:00 p.m. in Rehoboth Chr. Ref. Church, Sugog St., Bowmanville. Andre Knevel at the organ.
Dec. 21	Christmas Concert by the Choirs & Brass directed by Leendert Kooy at 8:00 p.m. in the Willowdale United Church, Kenneth Ave., (behind the Northtown Plaza), Willowdale. Andre Knevel at the organ.
Dec. 26	Annual Boxing Day Hockey Tournament in the Perry St. Arena, Woodstock, Ont.; 8 teams participating — starting time 7 a.m.

Christmas Concert by the Bell Canto Christian Choral Society, London; The St. Thomas Ladies Choir and District Male Choir. Dec. 11, 8:15 p.m. at Bethel CRC, London and Dec. 18, 8:00 p.m. at First United Church, St. George St., St. Thomas.

## Next Issue

Dated	Mailed	Deadline for classified ads	Deadline for other advertising
Fri. Dec. 16	Tues. Dec. 13	Thurs. Dec. 8-8:30 a.m.	Wed. Dec. 7-8:30 a.m.
Fri. Dec. 23	Tues. Dec. 20	Thurs. Dec. 15-8:30 a.m.	Wed. Dec. 14-8:30 a.m.
Fri. Jan. 6	Tues. Jan. 3	Thurs. Dec. 22-8:30 a.m.	Wed. Dec. 21-8:30 a.m.

## Brampton Christian Choral Society

"PRAISE THE LORD" — Director, Mr. William Hoekstra presents  
A Christmas Cantata "Story of Bethlehem"  
Sunday, December 18, 1983 — 8 p.m.  
2nd Christian Reformed Church of Brampton  
Corner of Steeles Avenue West and McLaughlin Rd. S.

## Hamilton District Christian High Choir and Band

presents a Christmas Concert

Date: December 14, 1983

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Place: HDCH Auditorium

Tickets: \$2.00 per person

\$5.00 per family

## LET'S PLAY CHESS

Editor: Pete Layer

SECOND SERIES OF PROBLEMS IN DECEMBER  
#986

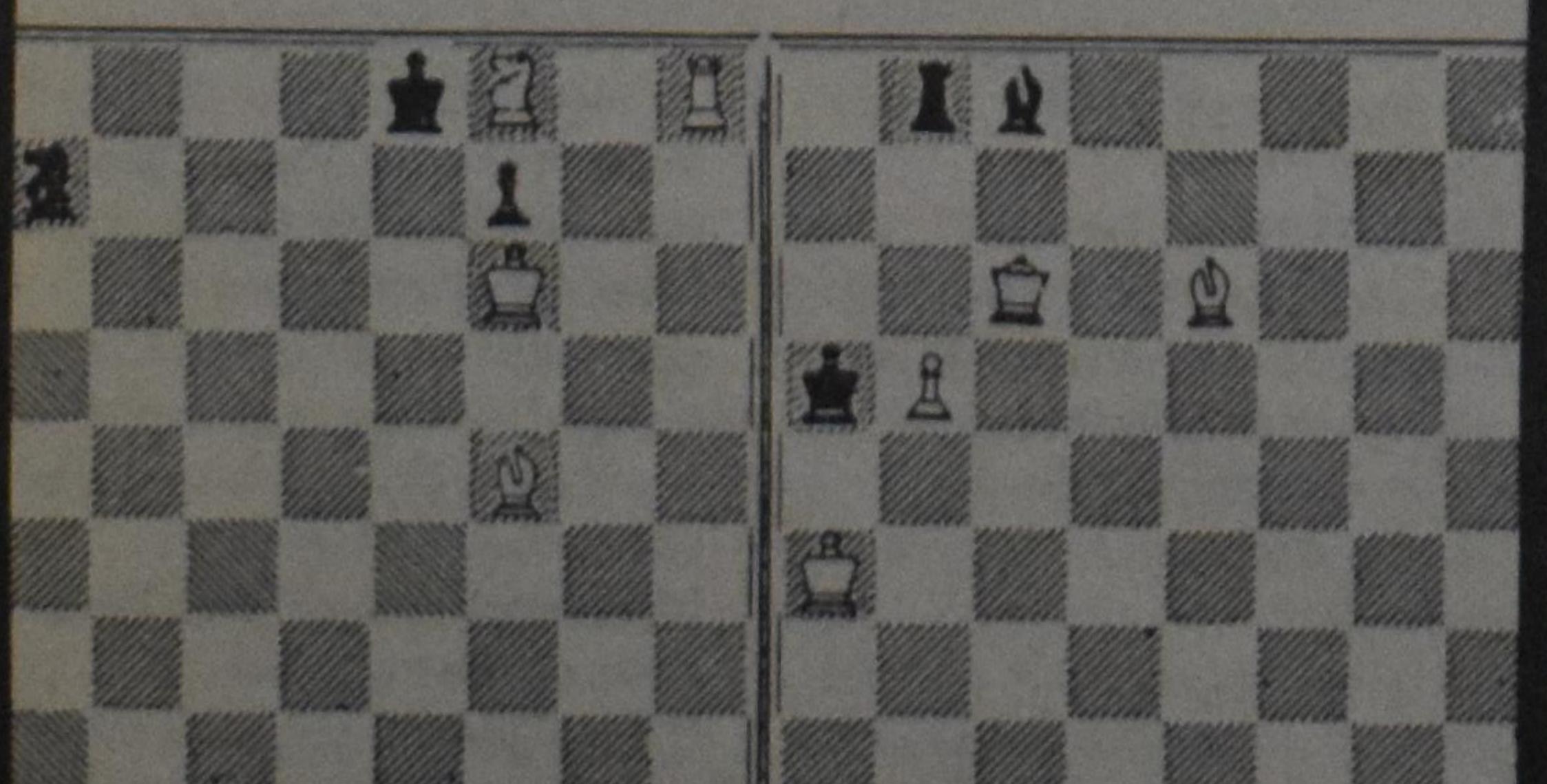
#987

T. Siers,  
Germany, 1947

3

Dr. K. Fabel  
Germany, 1959

3



### Notes

- Problems with seven pieces or less are called miniatures. It is quite an art to compose worthwhile problems of this sort. The possibilities are as varied as the composers wish them to be as can be seen in these two German compositions. Have fun with them.
- Please give the key, threat and all variations for #986.
- Please give the key and threat, if any, for #987.
- The deadline for the December problems #984-987 is Jan. 20 (Ontario postmark) and Jan. 30 (others).



## small talk

Alice Los

## In search of unique Christmas decorations

Most Christmas decorations are irrelevant at best. Some are misleading. What do cornhusk dolls have to do with Ephrata's fields and how, pray tell, does a gingham candy cane reflect Divine love?

Yet, by every year's end we continue to deck our homes with bows and garlands and an ever increasing variety of trinkets. It reinforces the schmaltzy mood of the season which, by the end of November, is firmly in place. The merchants of this planet will see to that.

Most of us surrender willingly. I do. I like the lights, the music, the warmth and the gaiety of it all.

There was a time, in a more sober past, when on December 24 we simply put out a few candles and stepped into the backyard for some greenery over the mantel. But we seem to have collectively outgrown simple things. We've become more sophisticated or, as we like to think, more creative. And we allow ourselves much freedom of expression when we hang our baubles and spray cheap glitter from a can.

During the countdown I too set an evening aside to take the box marked "Christmas decorations" from the basement and carefully place the felt angel and the drummer boy's drums together with the bells and the star which a friend once cleverly crafted from straw. Some of these ornaments our family considers to be uniquely ours as they symbolize events which were important to us.

But always I have to conquer a somewhat guilty uneasiness when I set out on this ritual. Apart from good food and family togetherness my childhood Christmases were strictly religious and now, for me, every shiny ball represents the commercial aspect of this holy feast. Although I suppose there's a more complicated explanation.

When we were children, my friends and I used to self-righteously denounce the small replica of a stable complete with the Christ Child in a basket which our Roman Catholic neighbours

kept on display next to their Christmas tree which, we were told, was another offense. Now I often wish I had an aesthetically acceptable stable scene to put up in a corner of the living room. At least I would be true to what I believe in. Together with the star and lots of candles it would be quite enough. Although, knowing myself, I'd sneak the drums in yet too.

But, if our usual decorations are irrelevant, they reveal something about us as well. That's what I thought when I looked over the figures stuck on the wall in our church once. There were the usual people such as Mary, Joseph, shepherds and wise men. All sorts of beasts too. Then there was the manger, conspicuously empty. Why? What good does an empty manger do?

Of course, a reluctance to appear too familiar is very understandable. Yet, was this not a denial of the human-ness of Christ? Didn't we quite dare or even want to acknowledge Him as a human being who had to grow up like you and I did?

Wasn't He a human being who scraped his knees and bit his nails? who struggled with pimples perhaps, or dandruff?

I cringe as I write this and well I should. Not because it's rude to imagine these things but because it could so very well be true, and it would be yet another facet of His humiliation.

But until I see how my salvation depends on that tiny toddler setting his first uncertain steps on Egyptian soil, I'm depriving myself of a rich, if sobering dimension of Christmas. And compared to its breathtaking truth most of our baubles and glitter seem awfully cheap, if not unacceptable.

Perhaps it's time for the family of God to search for the ornaments that are uniquely theirs, symbols of an unspeakable heritage.

Alice Los lives in Kemptville, Ontario.

## Durham Chr. Homes, Inc.

Durham Chr. Homes, Inc. is the name of the organization that hopes to build an accommodation for Senior Citizens. Seven churches in this area: Bowmanville, Lindsay,

Port Perry, Whitby and Oshawa are represented in the Board with fourteen members. Mr. G. Witvoet is the president, Mr. G. Hartemink, secretary, Mr. W. Triemstra the treasurer, Mr.

A.L. Bons is vice-all. We count 210 members, but we need more. It is gratifying to know that these 210 members have paid \$25 as their annual contribution for 1983/84. Please if you are not a member as yet, join the ranks of these 210! The representatives of your church are Mr. G. Witvoet and Mr. W. Triemstra. Please give one of those a call (728-5932 or 571-1966) and he will explain the work of the board to you. The organization has just started. Wouldn't it be great when you are also involved from the beginning. Hope to meet you at one of our membership meetings.

for the Board:  
Rev. J. VanHarmelen

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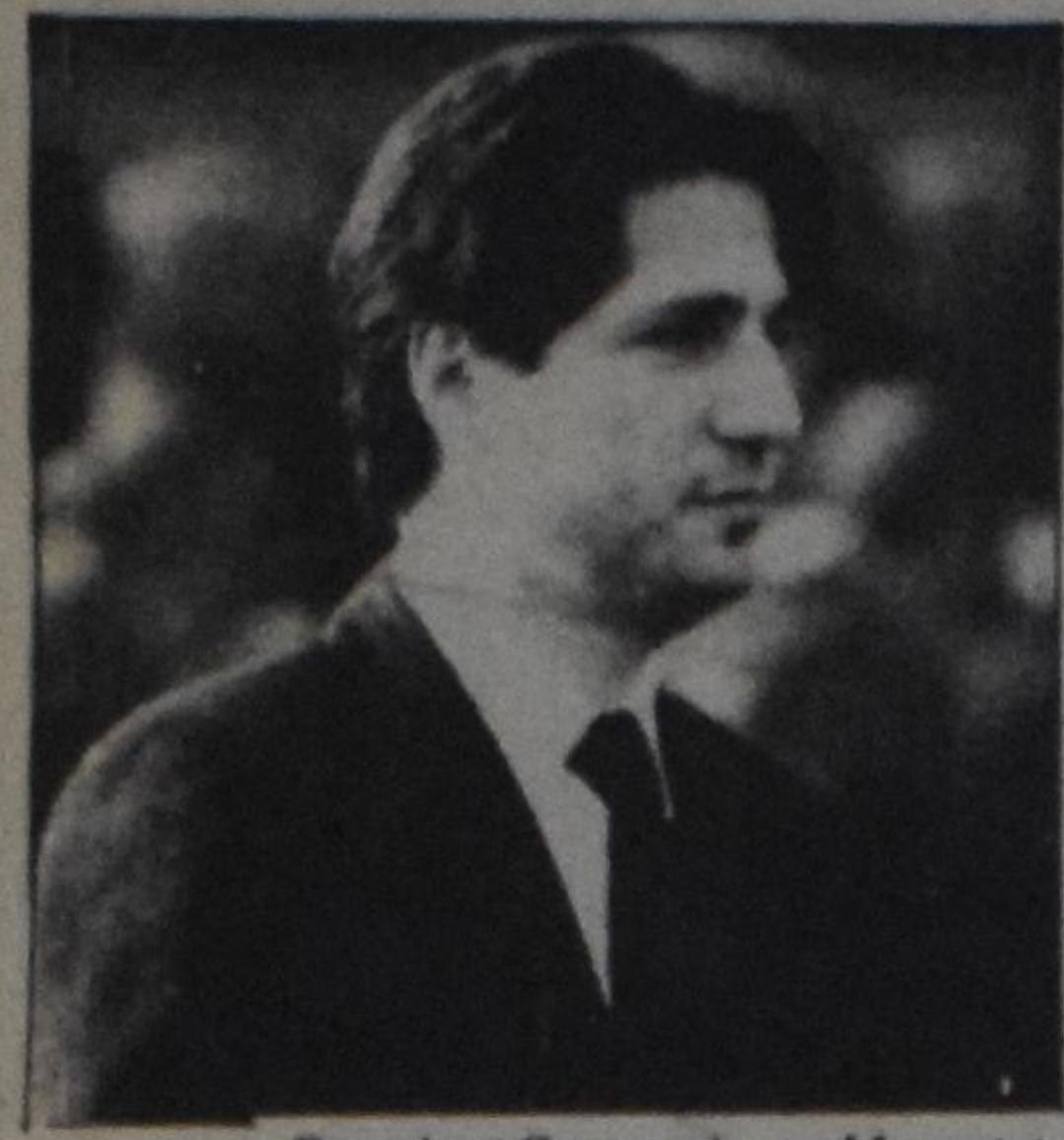
## Dutch

# De spanning tussen Maronieten en Druzen

**Het hart van Libanon, het eigenlijke Libanon zijn de bergen. Twee groepen zoeken en vinden in de loop der eeuwen daar een toevlucht. Aan de ene kant Maronieten, aan de andere kant Druzen. De ene groep leeft op gespannen voet met hun mede-christenen, de andere ligt overhoop met hun mede-moslims.**

### Maronieten

Maronieten leiden hun



President Gemayel, een Maroniet

naam af van Sint Maron of misschien nog meer van Yuhanna Maron de eerste patriarch en eigenlijk de stichter van hun kerk.

Sommige kerken uit het Midden-Oosten worden monofysisch genoemd. Dat wil zeggen dat zij geloven in de ene godmenschelijke natuur (mono-fysis) in Christus. Zo zouden de Maronieten geloofd hebben in de ene godmenschelijke wil in Christus. Ik zei "zouden," omdat de

Maronieten zelf meestal beweren dat zij nimmer deze 'ketterij' hebben aangehangen. Hun argument daarvoor is dat een bepaald concilie dat deze leer als ketterij heeft veroordeeld, de Maronieten nergens noemt.

Maar zoals vaker geldt, de werkelijke conflicten zijn niet zozeer theologisch als wel nationaal van aard. Vervolgd als zij worden, zoeken de Maronieten in de bergen veiligheid. Zij weten hun eigenheid en zelfstandigheid te bewaren onder meer in hun kloosters die op forten lijken.

Dat blijft min of meer ook zo in de tijd na de arabisch-islamitische verovering. Zij zien zichzelf als een klein eiland temidden van 'de zee van de islam' en weten een grotere zelfstandigheid te bevechten dan enige andere christelijke groep in het MiddenOosten, de Armeniers misschien uitgezonderd.

### Fransen

In de tijd van de kruistochten, als de Franken (Fransen en andere Europeanen) naar het Heilige Land trekken, zijn het de Maronieten die hen als gidsen dienen. De Franse connectie blijft een kenmerk van de Libanese geschiedenis. Het houdt ook een toenadering tot de Rooms-Katholieke Kerk in en verklaart waarom dat 'ketterse' verleden wat wordt weggemoffeld.

Toch duurt het nog tot de

eerste helft van de achttiende eeuw dat het tot een volledige unie met Rome komt. In het MiddenOosten zijn andere kerken die met Rome geünieerd zijn, zoals de Grieks-Katholieken, maar in het geval van de Maronieten gaat het om een hele kerk die zich met Rome verenigt, al behoudt zij een eigen patriarch en kerkbestuur.

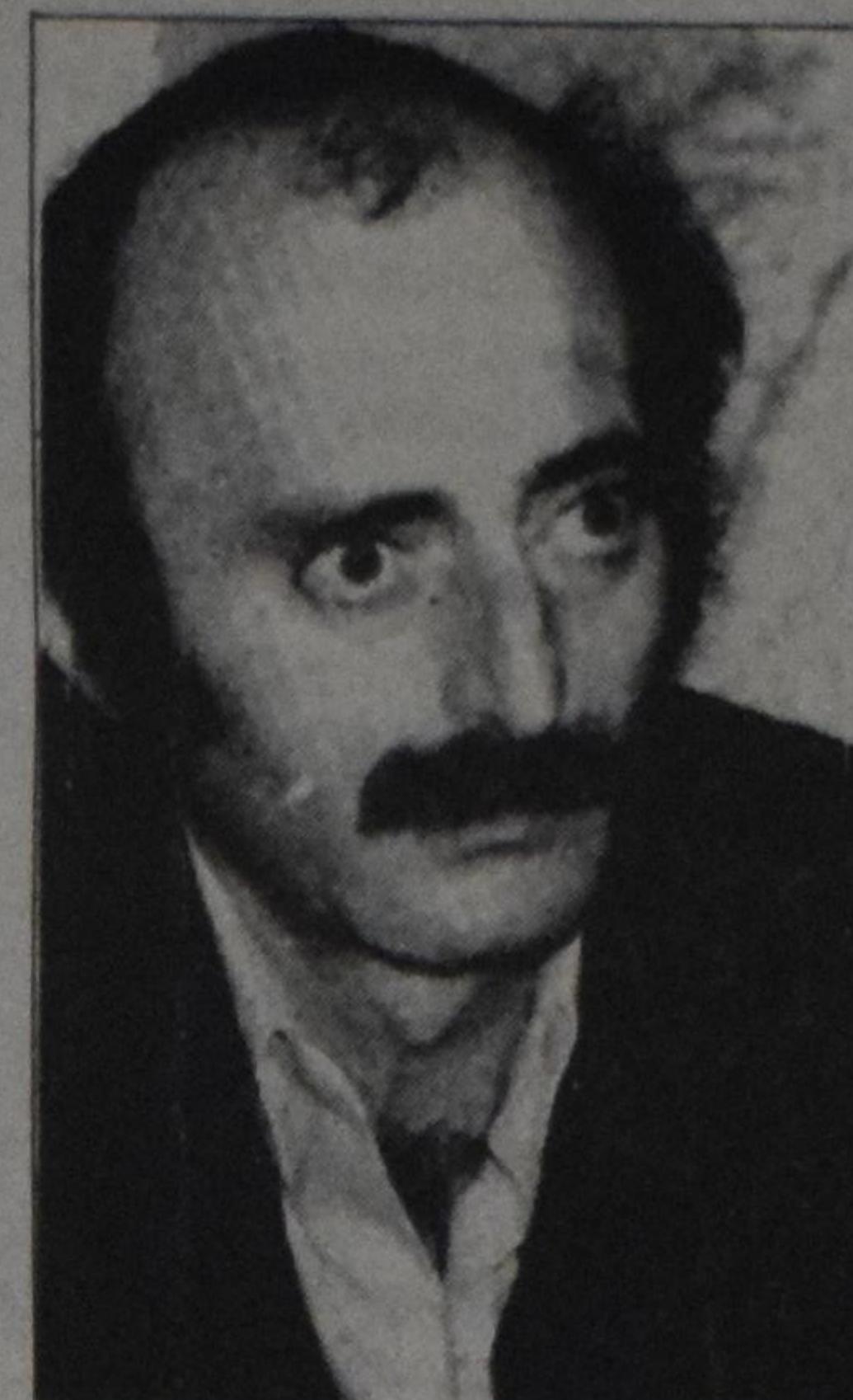
In 1860, wanneer er een moordpartij onder christenen plaatsvindt die tot op de dag van vandaag in de herinnering van de Maronieten is voort blijven leven, is het Frankrijk onder Napoleon III die in de burgeroorlog ingrijpt (met andere Europese mogendheden) ten behoeve van de Maronieten.

Het zijn opnieuw de Fransen die in de twintiger jaren van onze eeuw het mandaat over Libanon krijgen. Zij stichten het zogenaamde 'Groot Libanon,' dat wil zeggen Libanon binnen zijn huidige grenzen. Aan de voornamelijk door Maronieten en Druzen bewoonde 'Berg-Libanon' worden de steden als Beirut en Tripoli toegevoegd alsmede de Beqa'-vlakte. Onder andere de Beqa'-vlakte behoorde aan de provincie Syrie, het gebied dat nu (opnieuw!) door Syrie wordt bezet gehouden.

### Druzen

De belangrijkste groep met wie de Maronieten de bergen moeten delen, zijn sinds de

elfde eeuw de Druzen. Dat is een merkwaardige en moeilijk te beschrijven groep die een geheel eigen plaats inneemt in het bonte spectrum van het Midden-Oosten. Druzen vind je behalve in Libanon (300.000), in Syrie (360.000), Israel (45.000) en Jordanië (3.000).



Druze leider Walid Joumblatt

Vooral politiek gesproken zijn ze wel kameleontisch genoemd. Zij nemen de politieke kleur van hun omgeving aan. Dat roept de idee op van oneerlijkheid, maar het moet verklaard en begrepen worden tegen hun Sji'itische achtergrond.

Sji'ieten, die tien procent van alle moslims in de wereld uitmaken, hebben meestal als verdrukte minderheden moeten leven temidden van Soennitisch moslimse meerderheden. Dat leidde ertoe dat zij soms hun overtuigingen geheim hielden en uiterlijk, 'om de lieve vrede' en om te overleven, zich anders uitlieten of gedroegen dan zij in hun hart geloofden.

Dat geldt nu ook voor de Druzen. Zij zijn als het ware een zijtak van de Sji'itische boom. Zij hangen een soort gnostische geheimleer aan en geloven onder meer in de reincarnatie.

Het hoeft dan ook niet te verwonderen dat Kamal Joumblatt, de vader van Walid Joumblatt, regelmatig naar India pelgrimeerde. Een en ander betekent dat zij eigenlijk de islamitische achtergrond niet zo serieus meer nemen en soms dan ook amper of in het geheel niet meer door anderen als moslims worden beschouwd.

### Machtsevenwicht

Maronieten en Druzen hebben de eeuwen door in een spanningsvolle verhouding samengeleefd, regelmatig vechtend wie de hegemonie zou krijgen.

Het laat zich verstaan dat een dergelijk vaak precair evenwicht gemakkelijk door externe factoren uit balans te krijgen is. Steeds zijn er weer diegenen geweest die het oude volkerenspel — verdeel en heers — hebben gespeeld en de ene of andere groep ten eigen bate en ten koste van de andere heeft geholpen.

In de tijd die voorafging aan

de Israëlische invasie van 1982 en in de tijd die daar direct op volgde, heeft de regering van Israel gewed op het paard van Bashir Jemayyil, op de Falangisten die als het ware de militaire arm zijn van de Maronieten (niet alle). Zij hielden tot voor kort het Shufgebergte onder controle waardoor de Falangisten de kans kregen hun invloed uit te strekken tot een gebied waar zij tot voor de invasie niet konden komen.

Ook de Druzen werden meer bewapend. De terugtrekking van de Israëlische troepen luidde de door ieder voorspelde botsing in, gericht als deze is op het vereffenen van een aantal oude rekeningen en het hervinden van een nieuw machtsevenwicht.

De Druzen krijgen in deze steun van zowel de (andere) Sji'iten als de Palestijnen. De Sji'iten in Libanon behoren tot de armste lagen van de bevolking. Zij zijn het talrijkst van de Libanese moslims. Een groot aantal van hen moet vluchten vanwege de bombardementen, invasies en schermutselingen tussen Israel en de Palestijnen (Fatah-Land). Zij vormen onder meer een verpauperde gordel rondom Beirut.

### Nieuwe factor

De Palestijnen en de Palestijnse kwestie is een nieuwe factor ten opzichte van de vorige eeuw. De Palestijnse strijders die vorig jaar september gedwongen waren het land te verlaten, zijn gedeeltelijk door de 'achterdeur' weer binnen gekomen en nemen weer deel aan de strijd. Zij zijn niet in de laatste plaats door Syrische medewerking verdeeld.

De situatie is en blijft uitzichtloos. Syrie trekt zich niet terug als Israel zich niet terugtrekt, Israel trekt zich niet terug als Syrie niet hetzelfde doet. Beide landen lijken voorlopig geen aanstalten te maken om verandering in die situatie te brengen.

**Het zogenoemde Midden-Oosten conflict is ingewikkeld, maar toch ook weer niet zozeer dat je niet zou kunnen zeggen dat de kern ervan het Palestijnse vraagstuk blijft. Op korte termijn valt het niet te verwachten dat op ook maar enigerlei wijze tegemoet zal worden gekomen aan enige vorm van zelfbeschikkingsrecht van Palestijnen.**

**Zeker is dat wanneer het Palestijnse vraagstuk niet wordt opgelost, ook het vraagstuk van Libanon onopgelost zal blijven. Er bestaat zelfs kans dat het geschil zich verder tot in Syrie toe uitbreidt.** (Overgenomen uit Centraal Weekblad, 19 Oktober, 1983).

## Gaat u kadootjes sturen naar uw familie in Holland?

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## Press Review

Carl D. Tuyl



**B**ehold another flat and contrived pressreview. The longest session of the House of Commons came to an end. Its record filled 29,000 pages of Hansard totalling 27 million words. It took 591 days to bring the session to its close, and 150 bills were passed. The government was mightily impressed with itself, and said so by mouth of the Governor-General, who officially ended the session.

**T**rudeau's peace initiative also came to an end with little more to do for our travelling Prime Minister than wait and see. His efforts are now bread cast upon the waters of international diplomacy, and we pray that it will return after not too many days.

The government's policy on weights and measurements underwent drastic change when it was decided to forego enforcement of the introduction of the metric system. Besides our two official languages we're going to have a dual system of measurements. Great!

**I**n the Christmas season we will also be blessed by two postal rates. The post office will charge the usual 32 cents, but the union by way of protest will allow mail with 10 cent stamps to be delivered. We had not heard from the mail-carriers for such a long time, and I almost missed the suspense which they managed to inject into our social fabric for such a long time. Anyway, they're back with a vengeance now.

**A**federal Court of Appeal ruled that the cabinet's decision to allow Cruise missiles to be tested in Canada is not unconstitutional. But the court did rule that it considered the review of cabinet decisions within its jurisdiction this was somewhat of a defeat for the government, which had held that cabinet decisions were not to be challenged by the courts. The matter will be appealed, of course.

**H**ere are some interesting financial statistics: the debt of the province of New Brunswick stood at 1.4 billion in the spring of this year; that amount constituted an increase of 388 million over the previous year, and it was 783 million more than in the year 1980. When it comes to borrowing money the province of New Brunswick is not hesitant as you can see.

The P.Q. will spend \$500,000 in an advertising campaign which will extol the government's economic

recovery program. To gain even more popularity, especially among the business community the Quebec government plans to surrender its liquor monopoly. This column, which was one of the first to report certain questions concerning the integrity of Liberal M.P. Bryce Mackasey, wants to assure its readers that the Honourable member was acquitted of all charges by the House of Commons committee which examined the accusations.

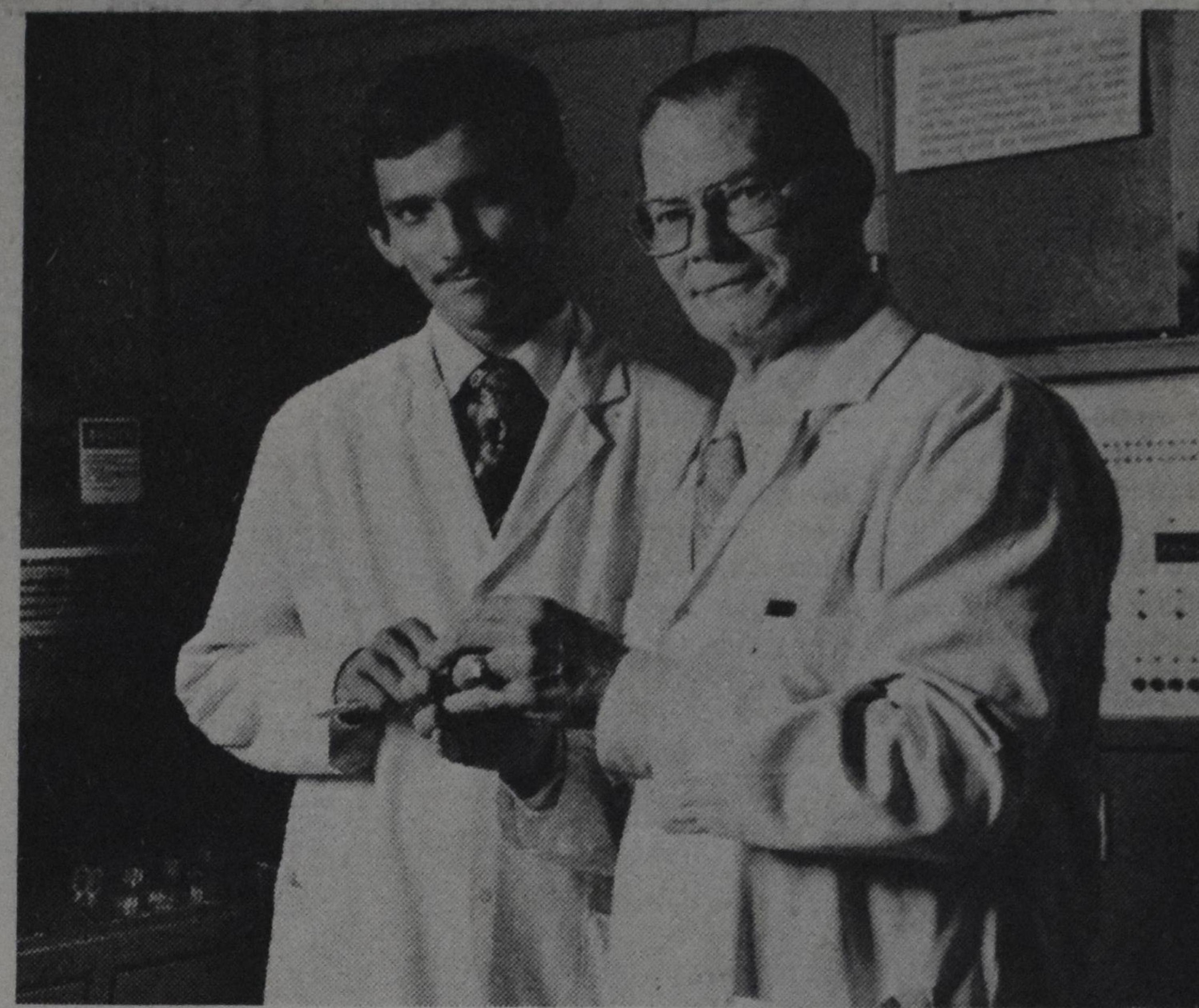
**O**n the international scene there was a clearly observable warming up in the relationship between Washington and Israel. The new Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir visited the American capital and it seemed that considerable agreement was reached. Quite a change after the often cantankerous attitudes of Begin.

After the deployment of newer and more modern medium-range missiles in West Germany, the Russians walked out of the negotiations in Geneva, but West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl received a letter from Yuri Andropov which announced that "the Soviet Union does not wish to view the situation as irreversible." The deployment of the missiles was greeted with massive demonstrations in West Germany.

**T**he Pope asked the State of Florida not to execute Robert Sullivan, convicted murderer, whose last minute appeal was rejected. The State of Florida was not impressed and Sullivan died in the electric chair.

**T**he strike of civil servants in The Netherlands seems to be ended, and you may expect mail from your aunt in Monnikendam at any time. The Dutch police also freed Heineken and his chauffeur, after some eleven million dollars in ransom money had been paid to the kidnappers. The kidnap plot turned out to be a small industrial business — at least 24 persons have been arrested so far.

**A**nd here in conclusion an item from the London Free Press, sent to me by one of my faithful readers: a wallet is a device which permits you to lose all your valuables at the same time.



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**BEDRIJVEN DIE IN AANMERKING KOMEN:** Maatschappijen in de privé sector die op 1 juli 1983 voor tenminste een jaar een zaak drevieren.

**BANEN DIE IN AANMERKING KOMEN:** Nieuwe posities die niet zouden hebben bestaan zonder fondsen uit programma's en waarvoor geen andere subsidies worden betaald. Zij moeten tenminste 25 uur werk bieden gedurende 20 opeenvolgende weken en moeten bijdragen aan de werkvaring van een werknemer of de ontwikkeling van een beroep.

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\* een diploma bezitten van tenminste een eenjarig programma aan een opleidingsinstituut na de high school, tussen januari 1981 en december 1982 en niet in het bezit van een vaste baan met betrekking tot hun bekwaamheden.

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## Books



### The Old and the New Testament

*Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets ... Matthew 5:17*

When Jesus speaks of the law and the prophets he uses an expression which often stood for the whole Old Testament. Here Jesus points to a special aspect of the Old Testament, yet we notice that he stresses the unity which exists between the Old Testament and the New.

Many people rather think of a contrast. They say that the Old Testament pictures a harsh and cruel God with strict commandments and merciless punishments. Over against this picture — so they state — the God of the New Testament is full of loving kindness and compassion, a God of wonderful grace and forgiveness.

Moreover, the Old Testament is filled with bloody stories of heathen people who are doomed and killed by the ten thousands, while in the New Testament the same heathen people are objects of missionary efforts and approached with care and love.

This view seems to be right when you look merely at the facts. But it is wrong when you put the Old and the New Testament in the framework of the Kingdom of God. Then there is a difference, but not a contrast. Among other things the difference can be marked as typology and fulfilling.

In the Old Testament the Kingdom of God is an earthly kingdom. There is a temple with many symbolic ceremonies. There is a nation with the blessings of harvest and prosperity and the punishment of crop failure and adversity. There is also war against enemies.

However, this is all an outward earthly foreshadowing of the New Testament Kingdom of God which is not of this world.

In the centre, between the two appearances of God's Kingdom, Jesus Christ stands. He came to fulfill all foreshadowing. In his coming the universal Kingdom of God was at hand. Therefore he did not do away with the Old Testament. He made true all what was foreshadowed.

We must pray that the Holy Spirit will teach us to reach the Old Testament with that view in mind.

**Rev. H. Van Andel**

*Van Andel is a retired minister living in Burnaby, BC*

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## What sorts of books are people buying this year?

### Staff

A quick survey of a few Christian bookstores reveals that Robert Schuller's book, *Tough Times Never Last But Tough People Do*, is a runaway favourite with readers for Christmas. Following closely behind is *Loving God* by Charles Colson. Both books are of the inspirational type. Colson talks about his own growth as a Christian while Schuller is known as a "positive" thinker.

Bibles still continue to outsell all other books at Christmas, particularly the *New International Version* and the *Catholic Good News*. Bookstore owners attribute this to the Renewal programme the Roman Catholic Church is involved in.

*To All Our Children* by Albert Vandermey is a pictorial history

of the Dutch immigrants who came to Canada in the 1950's. It's sure to grace many coffee tables this winter.

A new interest by children in the story of Ann Frank is witnessed by sales of *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Ann Frank. This edition is accompanied by photographs of the Frank's living quarters.

Also for children, the eight volume set written by Laura Ingalls Wilder about life on the prairies is ever popular. Parents are also buying books by Gilbert Beers, (*Through Golden Windows*) and David and Karen Mains (*Tales of the Kingdom*). Books by Janette Oke for the teenage reader are also being sold in great numbers. "Mothers like to buy them for their daughters," said one book



dealer. For a relective book on 1 Corinthians 13, many people are reaching for Lewis Smedes' *Love Within Limits*.

Topping the bestseller list in the secular market is *The Game* by hockey star Ken Dryden who writes as well as he plays. Morley Callaghan's *A Time for Judas* as well as Tom Harper's *Heaven and Hell* are selling well.

When asked to respond to our question of what book they would like to receive, several children, ranging in age from 5 to 14 replied, "Jelly Belly" by Dennis Lee. The book is one of rhyming nonsense with wonderful illustrations. A sort of Canadian Mother Goose that's bound to be a classic.

### Bible study

## The characteristics of God

**Our God**, Russel G. Jones, Accent Books, Denver, Col., 1981; paperback, 160 pp., price: \$3.95 U.S. Rev. Johan D. Tangelander, Strathroy, Ont.

What is God like? How much do we know about Him? We cannot understand God. He is incomprehensible. But this does not mean that we cannot have any knowledge of Him. Through the study of the Bible and general revelation we do get our basic information about God. Since we are created for worship we must come to a deeper and better understanding of God. The more we know of Him, the more we shall praise Him.

Jones discusses 15 attributes or characteristics of God. He defines attributes as "... simply the perfections which are true of God as set forth in Scripture and are visibly used by Him in works of creation, providence and redemption." He wants his readers to study such characteristics of God as omnipotence, goodness, justice, love, mercy, wrath and draw applications from these truths for our lives.

I heartily recommend this devotional study for the strengthening and enrichment of our faith in the infinite personal God, Whom we know through Jesus Christ and the Bible.

### Seniors

## Choosing a place to live

**I Chose to Live in a Nursing Home**, Opal Hutchins Sollenberger, David C. Cook Publishing Co., 850 North Grove Ave., Elgin, Ill. 60120, USA; pb., 192 pages. Rita Otten, Beamsville, Ont.

This is a very positive look at the stage, late in life, when a person often is not able to stay in his or her own home any longer.

For the author, the choice did not have to be made on the spur of the moment when she lost her husband, and a severe heart condition made it necessary that she should live where immediate medical help was available. She and her husband had done their planning when both were still in relatively good health, and selected a nursing home in which the care and general atmosphere answered to the standards they had set for themselves. If and when the time would come that they would need this care, they, as well as their relatives would know where to turn to.

Naturally, not every person is able to do this type of planning ahead, and finding some place that answers to his need. The

matter of finances, location, whether or not a person is alone or still has their marriage partner (who may not be in need of the same level of care, and consequently will not enter a nursing home), and last but not least, the Christian atmosphere or lack of it, are all very important factors to be considered. It may prove impossible to find a nursing home resembling the one Mrs. Sollenberger found.

She has some helpful things to say about positive attitudes toward fellow-residents and staff. The whole book is full of a wise, gentle humor, which in itself is a priceless quality in any person, and especially in one well over eighty!

Though parts of the appendix in the back apply to American conditions and legislation, I feel that it is worthwhile reading for Canadian seniors as well as their families.

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